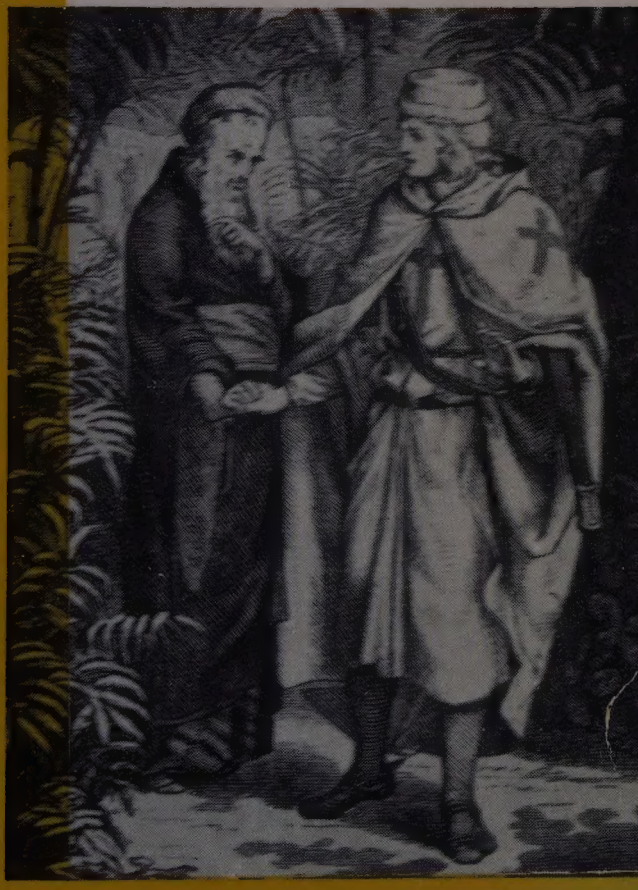
PT
2403
.A7
R43
1950

LESSING

TABOR COLLEGE LIBRARY
3 2002 00237 6182

Nathan der Weise

A TRANSLATION

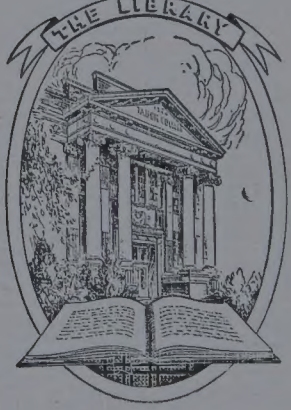


$1.25

BARRON'S EDUCATIONAL SERIES • GREAT NECK, NEW YORK

PT
2403
.A7
R43
1950

Tabor College
Hillsboro, Kansas



Class 832.61 No. 27467
L639nt

3-11-64

Nathan the Wise

832.61
L639nt

Nathan the Wise

(NATHAN DER WEISE)

BY

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing
1729-1781

TRANSLATED BY GUENTHER REINHARDT B.A.,M.A.

Barron's Educational Series, Inc.

GREAT NECK, NEW YORK

TABOR COLLEGE
LIBRARY

A Literal Translation of Nathan der Weise (Nathan the Wise) by Gotthold Ephriam Lessing. Copyright 1950 by Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 343 Great Neck Road, Great Neck, New York. No part of the material covered by this copyright may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher. Printed in the United States of America. Designed by Stefan Salter.

CONTENTS

	Page
Act One	7
Act Two	31
Act Three	55
Act Four	81
Act Five	105

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Sultan Saladin

Sittah, his sister

Nathan, a rich Jew in Jerusalem

Recha, his adopted daughter

Daja, a Christian woman in the house of the Jew as Recha's companion

A young Templar (Knight)

A Dervish

The Patriarch of Jerusalem

A Friar

(Mansor), an Emir, and several Mamelukes of Saladin

The scene is in Jerusalem

KEY TO SYMBOLS USED IN TRANSLATION

Parentheses starting with the letter "1." contain literal translations. Parentheses starting with the letter "f." contain free translations where the literal translation is used in the dialogue but the addition of the free translation is necessary to acquaint the reader with the modern English equivalent. Parentheses starting with "transl. note:" indicate special notes by the translator.

Act One

Scene 1.

ENTRANCE HALL IN NATHAN'S HOUSE

[Nathan returning from voyage. Daja advancing to meet him.]

DAJA. It is he! Nathan! Eternal praise be to God that at last you really return once more.

NATHAN. Yes, Daja, praised be God! But why "at last"? Had I intended to return sooner? And could I have returned sooner? Babylon lies a good seven hundred miles, from Jerusalem, the way I have been forced to choose my route by sideways, sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left. And collecting debts is also not the (kind of) business that moves swiftly, nor is it the kind that can be taken lightly.

DAJA. Oh, Nathan, how miserable, how miserable you could have become (right) here meanwhile! Your house....

NATHAN. Burned. I have already heard that. May God be merciful in that by now I have already heard everything!

DAJA. And it could easily have burned to the ground.

NATHAN. In that case, Daja, we would have built ourselves a new one and a more comfortable one.

DAJA. To be sure! But by a hair's breadth Recha would have been burned to death.

NATHAN. Burned to death? Who? My Recha? She? That I have not heard. Well then! In that case I would not have had further need for a house. Saved by a hair's breadth from burning to death! Ha! It has happened to her! She probably did burn to death! Come out with it and say it! Out with it! Kill me: torture me no longer. Yes, she has been burned to death.

DAJA. If she had - would you hear it from me?

NATHAN. Then why are you frightening me? Oh Recha! Oh my Recha!

DAJA. Yours? Your Recha?

NATHAN. If I should ever have to disaccustom myself to calling this child my child!

DAJA. Do you call everything you have with equal right your own?

NATHAN. Nothing with a greater right! Everything else I own, nature and (good) fortune have bestowed on me. But this possession alone I owe to virtue.

DAJA. Oh how dearly you, Nathan, make me pay for your kindness! (That is) if kindness practiced with such intent(ions) can still be called kindness!

NATHAN. With such intent(ions)? What intent(ions)?

DAJA. My conscience....

NATHAN. Daja, first of all let me tell you....

DAJA. My conscience, I say....

NATHAN. What beautiful silks I bought for you in Babylon. So rich, and so tastefully rich! For Recha herself I am bringing some hardly more beautiful.

DAJA. What is the use? Because my conscience, I simply have to tell you, will not allow itself to be lulled to sleep any longer.

NATHAN. And how you will love the bracelets, the earrings, and how much the ring and the necklace which I selected for you in Damascus will please you: that I am anxious to see.

DAJA. That is the way you are! If you can only give! Can only give!

NATHAN. You take as gladly, as gladly as I give to you - and keep quiet!

DAJA. And keep quiet! Who doubts, Nathan, that you are not probity, generosity itself? And yet....

NATHAN. And yet I am only a Jew? Is that not what you want to say?

DAJA. What I want to say - you know that better (than I).

NATHAN. Well then - keep quiet!

DAJA. So be it: I keep quiet. What culpable things before God (may) transpire thereby and (which) I cannot prevent, cannot alter - cannot - be they on your head!

NATHAN. Be on my head! - But where is she? Where is she keeping herself? Daja, if you should be deceiving me! Does she really know that I have arrived?

DAJA. That is what I ask you! Terror is still trembling through every one of her nerves. Fire still mirrors (itself) in her imagination, adding to everything it paints. In sleep her spirit is awake and in waking it sleeps, sometimes less than an animal, sometimes more than an angel.

NATHAN. Poor child! What manner of humans are we!

DAJA. This morning she lay for long with closed eyes and was as dead. Suddenly she started and exclaimed: "Harken! Harken! Here come my father's camels! Hear! His gentle voice itself!" With that her eye grew dim again and her head from which she had withdrawn the support of her arm fell on the pillow. - I ran through the gate! And behold, there you were really coming! You really came! What (a) miracle! All of her soul was all that time only with you - and him.

NATHAN. With him? With which him?

DAJA. With him who saved her from the fire.

NATHAN. Who was that? Who? Where is he? Who saved my Recha? Who?

DAJA. A young Templar who had been brought here as a prisoner a few days earlier and whom Saladin had pardoned.

NATHAN. What? A Templar whose life Sultan Saladin would have spared? No smaller miracle could have saved my Recha's life? God!

DAJA. Without him who again risked his unexpected gain anew it would have been the end of her.

NATHAN. Where is he, Daja, this noble man? Where is

he? Let me to his feet. You did give him for the first what treasures I had left with you? Did you give him everything? Did you promise (him) more? Much more?

DAJA. How could we?

NATHAN. You did not? Did not?

DAJA. He came, and no one knows whence he came. He went, and no one knows whither he went. Without any knowledge of the house, led only by his ear, he bravely thrust through the flame and smoke with (his) cloak held out before him, towards the voice which was calling us for help. We already thought him lost when suddenly out of smoke and flame he stood before us, carrying her high in his strong arm(s). Coldly and untouched by the jubilation of our thanks he puts down his prize, edges into the crowd and - disappears!

NATHAN. Not forever, let me hope.

DAJA. Afterwards, for the first days, we saw him wandering to and fro under the palm trees which yonder cast their shadow over the tomb of Him who has arisen. I approached him with elation, thanked (him), implored, urged, entreated him to see just once more the pious creature that would not be able to rest easy until she could have shed her tears of gratitude at his feet.

NATHAN. Well?

DAJA. In vain. He was deaf to our prayer. Especially on me he heaped such bitter scorn....

NATHAN. Until deterred by....

DAJA. Far from it! Each day again I went to see him. Let myself be mocked each day anew. What did I not suffer from him! What more would I not have suffered gladly! But he has ceased long since to visit the palms that cast their shadow over the tomb of our Resurrected One. And no one knows where he is keeping himself (1.: remains). You are amazed? You are meditating?

NATHAN. I am reflecting what kind of impression that is likely to make on a spirit like Recha's. To find oneself thus scorned by him whom one feels onself so strongly forced to

esteem highly; to be repulsed in that manner and yet to be so attracted - in truth, here (the) heart and (the) head must quarrel for a long time whether misanthropy (or) whether melancholy shall be victorious. But often neither wins, and phantasy, which meddles in the quarrel, makes dreamers with whom now the head must play (the part of) the heart, and now the heart must play (the part of) the head. Baleful exchange! The latter - unless I misjudge Recha - is Recha's case: she is dreaming.

DAJA. But, alas, so piously, so lovably!

NATHAN. But still it's dreaming, too.

DAJA. Above everything else, one whim, if you want (to call it that) is very dear to her. She thinks (that) her Templar (is) not of this earth and not mortal's (son); one of the angels to whose protection her little heart so gladly believed itself entrusted since (her) childhood, had hovered about her even in the fire (coming) out of his cloud into which he wrapped himself ordinarily, and (had) suddenly emerged as a Templar. Don't smile! Who knows? Allow her at least, smilingly, a phantom in which Jew and Christian and Mussulman unite - such (a) sweet phantom!

NATHAN. Sweet to me, too! Go, valiant Daja, go; see what she is doing, whether I can talk to her. After that I shall seek out the rude, moody guardian angel. And if he still deigns to pilgrimage here nether among us, deigns to practice chivalry in such unmannerly fashion, I shall certainly find him and bring him hither.

DAJA. You are venturing much.

NATHAN. Then sweeter truth will take the place of the sweet phantom. Because, Daja, believe me, another human being is still dearer to a human being than an angel. Thus, surely, you will not be angry with me to see the angel-dreamer cured?

DAJA. You are so good and at the same time (you) are so wicked! I am going! - But hear! But look! Here she comes herself.

Scene 2

[Enter Recha]

RECHA. So it is you entirely (f.: in the flesh), my father? I believed that you had merely sent your voice to precede you. Where are you been keeping yourself (f.: remaining)? What mountains, what deserts, what streams are still separating us? You are breathing wall to wall (f.: cheek to cheek) with her and you don't hasten to embrace your Recha? Poor Recha who meanwhile burned to death! Almost, almost burned to death. Almost only. Do not shudder! It is a horrid death, burning, Oh!

NATHAN. My child! My dear child!

RECHA. You had to cross Euphrates, Tigris, Jordan, cross, who knows what waters all? How often have I trembled for you before the fire came so close to me! Because since the fire came so close to me, I think (that) to die in water is refreshment, regalement, relief. But you have not drowned; I, I have not burned to death. How we shall rejoice and praise God, God! He, He carried you and the boat on wings of his invisible angel across the treacherous streams. He, He beckoned to my angel, that visibly he carry me through the fire on his white wings -

NATHAN. [Aside] White wings! Yes, yes - the white thrust-out cloak of the Templar.

RECHA. He visibly, visibly carry me through the fire (that was) blown away by his wings. Therefore I have seen an angel face to face - and my angel.

NATHAN. Recha would be worth that and would see in him no greater beauty than he in her.

RECHA. [Smiling] Whom are you flattering, my father? Whom? The angel or me?

NATHAN. But if a mere man, a man as nature produces them daily, had rendered you that service he would have to be an angel to you. He would have to be and would be.

RECHA. Not that kind of an angel, no! A real one; it certainly was a real one! Have not you, you yourself taught me

the possibility that there are angels, that God could also work miracles for the best of those who love Him? (And) I do love Him.

NATHAN. And he loves you and works miracles hourly for you and those like you, indeed he has already worked them for you since all eternity.

RECHA. That I hear gladly.

NATHAN. Why? Because it would sound quite natural, quite every-day-like if a real Templar had saved you: (but) should that be, therefore, less of a miracle? It is the greatest of miracles that the true, genuine miracles can become so commonplace for us, should become (that). Without this (one) general miracle, a intelligent (man) would have hardly ever called a miracle what might only be called a miracle for children who follow gaping only the most unusual, the newest.

DAJA. [Aside to Nathan] Do you really want to make her brain - that is over-strained even without (all) that - snap altogether by these kinds of subtleties?

NATHAN. Leave me (alone)! For my Recha it would not be sufficient miracle that a man has saved her who (himself) first had to be saved by no small miracle? Indeed, no small miracle! Because who has ever heard that Saladin ever spared a Templar? That ever a Templar asked to be saved by him? Hoped (for it)? Has ever offered him more for his freedom than the leather belt that drags his steel (f.: sword) and at the most, his dagger?

RECHA. That argues for me, my father. For that very reason that was no Templar; he only seemed to be. If no captured Templar ever comes to Jerusalem except for (his) certain death; if none walks about Jerusalem so unrestrained; how then could one have saved me voluntarily at night?

NATHAN. Look, how ingenious (you are)! Now, (you) Daja take (over) the conversation. I have it from you, indeed, that he was sent hither as a captive. Doubtless you know more.

DAJA. Well, yes. That is what they say, to be sure; but they are saying at the same time that Saladin pardoned the Templar because he resembled so (much) one of his brothers

whom he had loved particularly. But as it is many score years ago since this brother lived - he was named, I don't know what - he perished, I don't know where - that sounds so very - so very unbelievable, that probably there is nothing to the whole thing.

NATHAN. Lo! Daja! Why would this then be so incredible? Surely not - as it might well be (1.: well happens) - (in order) rather to believe something even more incredible? Why could not Saladin who loves all his brothers and sisters so (much), in his younger years have loved a brother yet especially well? Isn't it customary for two faces to resemble each other? Is an old impression a lost one? Does the same no longer recall the same? Since when? Where does the incredible come in here (1.: is contained) ? Lo, to be sure, wise Daja, for you it would no longer be a miracle; and only your miracles need... - deserve, I want to say - faith.

DAJA. You are mocking (me).

NATHAN. Because you are mocking me. But even in that way still, Recha, your rescue remains a miracle, performable only by Him who likes to lead by the weakest threads the sternest decisions, the stubbornest plots of the kings - His sport if not His scorn.

RECHA. My father! My father, if I (should) err, you know I do not like to err.

NATHAN. Rather, you like to be taught. See! A forehead curved like this or like that; the bridge of a nose arched this way rather than that; eyebrows that meander on a sharp or a dull bone like this or that; a line, a bend, an angle, a crease, a birth-mark, a nothing on an impetuous European's face: and you elude the fire, - in Asia! That would not be a miracle, (you) wonder-loving folk? Why then do you still trouble an angel?

DAJA. What harm does it do, Nathan, if I may speak, in view of all that to think rather that one had been saved by an angel than by a man? Does one not in that way feel oneself so much nearer to the original unfathomable cause of one's rescue?

NATHAN. Vainglory! And nothing but vainglory! The iron pot would like to be lifted from the flame with silver tongs so that it might fancy itself a pot of silver. Pshaw! And what harm does it do, you ask? What harm does it do? What good does it do? Might I just as well (1.: only) in turn inquire of you. Because your "Feeling oneself so much nearer to God" is nonsense or blasphemy. However, it does harm; yes, it does harm indeed. Come! Listen to me. It is not true that you (two), and especially you (Recha), would like very much to return again many great services to the being that rescued you - be it an angel or (be it) a man? Is that not true? Well, to an angel, what services, what great services might you render? You can thank him, you (can) worship him (1.: sigh to him), pray to him; (you) can melt in ecstasy over him; you can fast on the day of his feast, (can) donate alms. All (that is) nothing. Because I take it always that you yourself and your neighbor (1.: nearest one) thereby gain more than he. He does not grow fat by your fasting, he does not grow rich by your donations, he does not become more glorious by your ecstasy, he does not become more powerful by your confidence. Is that not so? But a man!

DAJA. Oh, to be sure, a man would have given us more opportunity to do something for him. And God knows how willing we were for that! However, he did not want, yea, did not need anything at all, (he) was as contented within himself, with himself, as only angels are, only angels can be.

RECHA. Finally, when he even disappeared....

NATHAN. Disappeared? How them, disappeared? No longer let himself be seen beneath the palms? What? Or have you really already searched for him beyond that?

DAJA. That now (we have) not really (done).

NATHAN. Not. Daja, not? Look here now, what harm it does. (You) cruel dreamers! Suppose this angel - well - had fallen ill!....

DAJA. Ill!

RECHA. What cold shivers are befalling me! Daja! My forehead, usually so warm, feel! (It) is a sudden ice!

NATHAN. He is a Frank, unaccustomed to this climate, is young, unaccustomed to the hard labor of his calling, (unaccustomed) to hunger and watching.

RECHA. Ill! Ill!

DAJA. That could be possible, Nathan merely opined.

NATHAN. Now he lies here! Has neither friend nor money to pay for friends.

RECHA. Ah, my father!

NATHAN. Lies there without nursing, without counsel and solace, a prey to pains and death!

RECHA. Where? Where?

NATHAN. He who had thrown himself into the fire for one whom he had never known, (never) seen - enough it was a human being....

DAJA. Nathan, spare her!

NATHAN. (He) who did not wish to know more closely her whom he had rescued, not to see (her) again, in order to save her from thanking....

DAJA. Spare her, Nathan!

NATHAN. To see (her) again also did not desire, be it than that he should save her a second time. Because - enough: it is a man!

DAJA. Desist and look!

NATHAN. He, dying he has nothing to comfort himself but the awareness of this deed!

DAJA. Desist! You are killing her!

NATHAN. And you have killed him! Could thus have killed him. - Recha! Recha! It is medicine, not poison that I am handing you. He is alive! Come to again! Is also not likely (to be) ill - not even ill.

RECHA. For sure? Not dead? Not ill?

NATHAN. For sure, not dead! Because God rewards the

good, done (down) here, while (we are) still here. Go! But do you understand how much easier (it) is to indulge in devout contemplation than to act well? How much the weakest man likes to indulge in devout contemplation only that he might - even if at the time he is not yet clearly conscious of of the (real) motive - only that he might not have to act well?

RECHA. Ah! My father! Please, leave, leave your Recha never again alone! - Is it not so: he may perhaps only have gone (away) on a journey?

NATHAN. Begone! That could be so. - I see yonder a Mussulman scrutinizing my laden camels with curious gaze. Do you know him?

DAJA. Ha! Your dervish.

NATHAN. Who?

DAJA. Your dervish, your chess companion.

NATHAN. Al-Hafi? (Is) that Al-Hafi?

DAJA. Now the Sultan's treasurer.

NATHAN. What? Al-Hafi? Are you dreaming again? It is he - truly it is he! (He) is approaching us. Inside with you (two), hurry! - What will I be hearing!

Scene 3

[Nathan and the Dervish]

DERVISH. Just make your eyes open as widely as you can!

NATHAN. Is it you? Is it not you? In this splendor - a dervish!....

DERVISH. Well? Why, then, not? Can nothing, absolutely nothing, be made of a dervish?

NATHAN. Lo, well, - enough! Only, I always thought (that) a dervish - that genuine kind of a dervish - would not let anything be made of himself.

DERVISH. By the Prophet! That I am not a genuine one

may also well be true. However, when one must -

NATHAN. Must! Dervish! (A) dervish must? No man must "must" - and a dervish should have to "must"? What then might he have to "must"?

DERVISH. That which is requested of him in the right manner and (what) he perceives as good: that is what a dervish "must".

NATHAN. By our God! Here you speak the truth. Let yourself be embraced, man. But you are still my friend?

DERVISH. And you do not ask first what I have become?

NATHAN. In spite of what you have become!

DERVISH. Could I have not become a fellow in the state whose friendship might be troublesome?

NATHAN. If your heart is still the dervish('s), I'll take a chance on it. The fellow in the state is only your dress.

DERVISH. Which also claims respect. - What do you think? Guess! What would I be at your court?

NATHAN. (A) dervish - nothing more. But on the side probably - (a) cook.

DERVISH. Well, indeed! To unlearn my trade with you. Cook! Not steward too? Confess that Saladin knows me better. Treasurer I have become with him.

NATHAN. You? With him?

DERVISH. Understand: of the lesser treasure; because the greater one his father administers still, the treasure for his house.

NATHAN. His house is large.

DERVISH. And larger than you believe; because every beggar belongs to his house.

NATHAN. But Saladin is so hostile towards the beggars -

DERVISH. That he has resolved to exterminate them root and branch - and (even) if in the process (1.: in doing so) he should become a beggar himself.

NATHAN. Splendid! That's what I believe in too.

DERVISH. He is already (one) too, as well as any! Because his treasure is much emptier still than empty every day with the sun's setting. The flood tide, as high as it arises in the morning, has (always) long since ebbed by noon -

NATHAN. Because in part canals devour it which are equally impossible to fill or to stop up.

DERVISH. (You) hit (the mark)!

NATHAN. I am familiar with that.

DERVISH. It is of course unbecoming if prices are vultures among carcasses. But if they are carcasses among vultures it is ten times less becoming.

NATHAN. Oh don't (say that), dervish! Don't!

DERVISH. It is easy for you to talk (that way), you! Come, what do you give me? Then I'll cede my office to you.

NATHAN. How much does your office bring you?

DERVISH. Me? Not much. But to you, you it can bring in splendid interest. Because if there is low tide in the treasury - as happens often - you pull open your sluice gates, advance, and take of interest whatever pleases you.

NATHAN. Interest, too, on the interest of the interest (f.: compound interest too)?

DERVISH. Of course.

NATHAN. Until my capital will have turned into nothing but interest.

DERVISH. That doesn't tempt you? Well, then, write the bill of divorce for our friendship at once! Because verily, I counted very much on you.

NATHAN. Verily. How so then? How so then?

DERVISH. That you would help me conduct my office honorably; that at all times I would find (1.: have) an open exchequer with you. - You are shaking your head?

NATHAN. Well, let us understand each other only right!

HILLSBORO, KANSAS LABOR COLLEGE

In this case it is (a matter of) making distinctions. You? Why not you? Al-Hafi, (the) dervish, is always welcome to everything that is within my power (1.: am capable of). But Al-Hafi (the) Defterdar (transl. note: treasurer) of Saladin, he - him -

DERVISH. Did I not gues it? (Oh) that indeed you are always as good as (you are) wise, as wise as (you are) good! Patience! What you are distinguishing in Hafi, shall be divorced again quickly. Behold here the garb of honor which Saladin has given me. Ere it will be faded, ere it will have turned to rags as they become a dervish, it will be hanging on a peg in Jerusalem, I shall be at the Ganges where, freed and barefooted, I shall be treading the hot sand with my teachers.

NATHAN. How like you!

DERVISH. And play chess with them.

NATHAN. Your highest boon!

DERVISH. Just think what (might have) tempted me! That I myself might no longer go begging? Could play the rich man with beggars? Would be powerful in a trice to change the richest beggar into a poor rich man?

NATHAN. Well, not exactly that.

DERVISH. Something far more insipid! I felt myself flattered for the first time, flattered by the Sultan's good-hearted delusion -

NATHAN. Which was?

DERVISH. A beggar only could know of what mood beggars are; a beggar only could have learned to give graciously to beggars. "Your predecessor," he said, "was much too cold to suit me, (was) too rough. He gave so ungraciously, when he gave, inquired so impetuously first about the recipient; never satisfied that he knew only the need, he also wanted to know the cause of the need in order to weigh niggardly the gift according to its cause. That Al-Hafi will not (do)! That illiberally liberal Saladin will not appear through Al-Hafi! Al-Hafi does not resemble stopped pipes that again send forth their clear and serenely received waters this unclean and spouting. Al-Hafi thinks, Al-Hafi feels as I (do)!" That was how sweetly

the fowler's reed sounded until the simpleton was in the net. I, self-complacent fool! I, a self-complacent fool's self-complacent fool!

NATHAN. Go slow, my dervish, go slow!

DERVISH. So what? It would not be foolishness to oppress people, squeeze, plunder, torture, choke (them) by hundreds of thousands and to want to seem a philanthropist with (a few) individuals? It would not be folly to ape the compassion of the All-Highest that spreads itself without choosing between Bad and Good and (between) plains and deserts, in sunshine and in rain - and not to have the All-Highest's always plenteous hand? What? It would not be folly....

NATHAN. Enough! Desist!

DERVISH. But just let me also mention my folly! What? It would not be folly, to spy out in such follies yet the good side, in order to take part - because of the good side - in this (very) folly? Eh? That (would) not (be folly)?

NATHAN. Al-Hafi, pray, do hasten off soon into the desert again. I fear (that) precisely among men you might unlearn being a man.

DERVISH. Right! That I fear too. Farewell!

NATHAN. So hastily? But wait, Al-Hafi! Will, perchance, the desert be running away from you? Pray, wait! (Oh) that he would listen to me! Hey, Al-Hafi! Here! - He is gone and I would have liked so much to ask him about our Templar. (He) probably knows him.

Scene 4

[Daja enters hastily. Nathan]

DAJA. Oh Nathan, Nathan!

NATHAN. Well, what is it?

DAJA. He has appeared (1.: lets himself be seen) again! He has appeared (1.: lets himself be seen) again!

NATHAN. Who, Daja, who?

DAJA. He! He!

NATHAN. He? He? When does not that one appear (1.: let himself be seen)! But oh, only your he is called "he". That he should not! And even if he were an angel, not!

DAJA. He is again wandering to and fro beneath the palms and from time to time is breaking off dates for himself.

NATHAN. Eating them? And as a Templar?

DAJA. Why are you torturing me? Her eager eye guessed him already behind the densely entwined palms and is following him unremittingly. She has asked (1.: asks) me to beg of you, to implore you, to approach him without delay. Oh, hurry! She will wave to your from the window whether he is walking ahead or turning aside. Oh, hurry!

NATHAN. Like this? As I dismounted from the camel? Is that proper? Go, you hurry to him and notify him of my return. Be sure, the honorable man merely did not wish to enter my house in my absence, and will not be loath to come when the father himself is having him invited. Go, say (that) I am having him bid, heartily bid....

DAJA. All in vain! He will not come to you. Because, in brief, he does not come to a Jew.

NATHAN. So go at least to stop him, at least to accompany him with your eyes. Go, I (shall) follow you presently. [Nathan hurriedly enters the interior of the house and Daja exits.]

Scene 5

[Scene: A Square with Palms Beneath Which the Templar Is Walking Up and Down. A Friar Is Following Him at Some Distance and from the Side, Always as Though He Were About to Accost Him.]

TEMPLAR. He is not following me out of boredom (f.: because he has nothing better to do). Behold! How he is squinting at my hands! - Good Brother - I can perhaps also call you Father, (can I) not?

FRIAR. No, Brother, lay brother only, at your service.

TEMPLAR. Yes, good Brother, if only one had something oneself! By God! By God! I have nothing -

FRIAR. And yet, most warm thanks! (May) God give you a thousandfold what you would have liked to give. Because the intention and not the gift make the giver. (Then), too, I was not at all dispatched after your Lordship because of alms.

TEMPLAR. But still dispatched?

FRIAR. Yes, from the cloister.

TEMPLAR. Where just now I had hoped to find a small pilgrim's meal!

FRIAR. The tables had already been filled; but if it would only please your Lordship to return with me.

TEMPLAR. What for? Indeed, I have not eaten meat for such a long time; however, what (difference) does it make? After all (1.: for sure), the dates are ripe.

FRIAR. Let the Sire beware of that fruit. Partaking too much of it is disabling (1.: not fit), constipates the spleen, makes the blood melancholy.

TEMPLAR. But if I should like to feel melancholy? But surely you weren't sent after me for this warning?

FRIAR. Oh no! I am only to inform myself about you, feel you out (1.: feel your tooth).

TEMPLAR. And that you are telling me just like that? (1.: so yourself)?

FRIAR. Why not?

TEMPLAR. A cunning brother! Does the cloister have more like you?

FRIAR. Don't know. I must obey, dear Sire.

TEMPLAR. And thus you then obey without much subtilising?

Friar. Would it otherwise be obeying, dear Sire?

TEMPLAR. (To think) that after all, simplicity is always right! Your might perhaps also confide to me who would like to know me better? I'll readily swear that it is not you yourself.

FRIAR. Does that become me? And would it profit me?

TEMPLAR. Then whom does it become and whom does it profit to be so curious? Whom then?

FRIAR. The Patriarch, I must believe, because he is the one who sent me after you.

TEMPLAR. The Patriarch! Does he not know the red cross on (the) white mantle better?

FRIAR. When even I know it!

TEMPLAR. Well, Brother? Well? I am a Templar, and a captive one. If I add: captured at Tebnin, the fortress which we would have liked to scale at the last hour of the truce in order to then set out for Sidon; if I add: I am one of twenty taken prisoner and the only one pardoned by Saladin: then the Patriarch will know what he needs to know - more than he needs.

FRIAR. But hardly more than he knows already. He would also like to know why the Sire was pardoned by Saladin - you all by yourself.

TEMPLAR. Do I know that myself? Already, my neck bared, I was kneeling on my mantle, awaiting the stroke, when Saladin eyes me more penetratingly, bounds closer to me and beckons. They lift me up; I am unshackled, want to thank him, see his eye in tears; he is mute, (so) am I; he goes, I remain. How now that is connected let the Patriarch unravel (for) himself.

FRIAR. He is concluding from that, that God must have preserved you for great, great things.

TEMPLAR. Indeed, for great (ones)! To save a Jew girl from the fire, to escort inquisitive pilgrims to (Mount) Sinai, and more of the like.

FRIAR. It will yet come in good time! (It) Is in the meantime also not bad. - Perhaps even the Patriarch has already far more important tasks for your Lordship.

TEMPLAR. So? Do you think, Brother?, Has he perchance already let you notice something?

FRIAR. Ah yes, indeed! At first I am only to sound out your Lordship (to see) whether he might be the right man.

TEMPLAR. Well then; proceed with your sounding out (1.: sound out only)! [Aside] I want (very) much to see how that one sounds out! [Aloud] Well?

FRIAR. The briefest (way) will probably be that I make known to your lordship quite straightforwardly (what) the Patriarch wishes.

TEMPLAR. Well!

FRIAR. He would like to have a little letter delivered by your Lordship.

TEMPLAR. By me? I am not a messenger. That, that would be the task that should be far more glorious than to snatch Jew girls from the fire?

FRIAR. Must well be! Because - says the Patriarch - this little letter was of very great moment for all Christendom. To have this little letter properly delivered - says the Patriarch - God in heaven would reward some day with a very special crown. And of this crown - says the Patriarch - none was worthier than you, my Lord.

TEMPLAR. Than I?

FRIAR. Because to earn this crown - says the Patriarch - hardly anyone could be cleverer either than you my Lord.

TEMPLAR. Than I?

FRIAR. He was not being restricted here; could look around everywhere here; knew how a city would have to be assaulted and (how) protected; could - says the Patriarch - best appraise the strength and weakness of the inner second wall, newly constructed by Saladin, (could) - says the Patriarch - describe (these matters) most distinctly to the warriors of God.

TEMPLAR. Good brother, if I now only also knew the contents of the little letter in more detail.

FRIAR, Yes, that - that, now, I don't know so well. The little letter, however, is (addressed) to King Philip. The Patriarch.... I have wondered often how such a saint who otherwise lives so wholly in heaven, can condescend at the same time to be so informed about things of this world. It must be a great ordeal (1.: drudgery) for him. (Transl. note: "It must be sour for him" - a German idiom).

TEMPLAR. Well then? The Patriarch - ?

FRIAR. Knows exactly, absolutely, reliably, how and where, how strongly, from which front, Saladin will open his campaign in case the war breaks out again.

TEMPLAR. He knows that?

FRIAR. Yes, and would like to make it known to King Philip, in order that he might (be able to) gauge approximately whether the danger is really so great (1.: fearful), in order that he might restore cost what it may, with Saladin the truce of arms which your Order already has broken so bravely.

TEMPLAR. What a Patriarch! Oh yes! The dear, brave man does not want me for a common messenger, (he) wants me as a spy. Tell your Patriarch, good brother, as much as you can fathom me, that that was not my business. (That) I still had to consider myself a prisoner, that (that) the Templar's sole calling was to strike with the sword, not to indulge in spying.

FRIAR. Indeed that's what I thought! (I) will also not take it very much amiss of your Lordship. However, the best is yet to come. The Patriarch, as the next thing here, has spied out the name of the fortress and where it lies on Lebanon, in which the gigantic sums are hidden with which Saladin's prudent father is paying the army and defraying the armaments of war. Saladin from time to time journeys by out-of-the-way paths to that fortress, with hardly any guard. You do understand (do you not)?

TEMPLAR. Never and never!

FRIAR. What, then, would well be easier than to seize Saladin? To kill him (1.: finish him off) ? You are shivering? Oh, a pair of Godfearing Maronites have already offered themselves to risk the venture, if only a gallant man were to lead them.

TEMPLAR. And the Patriarch would have selected me as that gallant man?

FRIAR. He believes that King Philip would be best suited to lending a hand from Ptolemais.

TEMPLAR. Me? Me, brother? Have you not heard? Just heard what obligation I have to Saladin?

FRIAR. I have heard it well.

TEMPLAR. And still?

FRIAR. Yes - thinks the Patriarch - that was in good order: God, however, and the Order....

TEMPLAR. Don't change the subject (1.: change nothing)! Do not order me (to perform) a knavish deed!

FRIAR. Certainly not! Only - thinks the Patriarch - a knavish deed before (f.: in the eyes of) men would not also be a knavish deed before (f.: in the eyes of) God.

TEMPLAR. I would be owing my life to Saladin - and would rob him of his?

FRIAR. Shame! But - thinks the Patriarch - Saladin would still always remain a foe of Christendom who could never (1.: not) acquire the right of being your friend.

TEMPLAR. Friend? Towards whom I merely do not want to become a scoundrel, an ungrateful scoundrel?

FRIAR. Indeed! Nevertheless - thinks the Patriarch - one was quits of thanks, before God and man quits, if the service rendered us had not materialized for our benefit. And since it is supposed to be bruited about - thinks the Patriarch - that the only reason why Saladin pardoned you was because a little something of his brother shone through in your features and your stance....

TEMPLAR. That the Patriarch knows too, and still? Ah! If that were certain! Ah, Saladin! What? Nature would have formed only just a single trait of mine in the shape of your brother and nothing would correspond to that in my soul? What might correspond to that I could suppress (merely) to please a Patriarch? Nature, you do not lie in that manner! Thus God does not contradict himself in His works! - Go Brother! Do not arouse my gall! Go! Go!

FRIAR. I am going, and go happier than I came. Forgive me, Sire. We cloister folk are duty bound to obey our superiors.

Scene 6

[The Templar and Daja, who already has been watching the Templar from a distance, and who is now approaching him.]

DAJA. The cloister brother, as it seems to me, did not leave him in the best mood. But I must needs risk anything (1.: risk my package).

TEMPLAR. Well, excellent! Is the proverb likely to lie that (says that) monk and woman, and woman and monk are the devil's two claws? Today he is tossing me from one into the other.

DAJA. What am I seeing? Noble knight, you? (To) God (be) thanks! To God a thousand thanks! Where indeed have you been hiding all this time? You have, perchance, not been ailing?

TEMPLAR. No.

DAJA. But (you are) well?

TEMPLAR. Yes.

DAJA. We were truly much worried on your behalf.

TEMPLAR. Really?

DAJA. You surely were (away) on a journey?

TEMPLAR. (You) guessed (it)!

DAJA. And have come back only today?

TEMPLAR. Yesterday.

DAJA. Recha's father, too, arrived today. And now may Recha hope then?

TEMPLAR. What?

DAJA. For what she had asked you repeatedly. Now, indeed, her father himself is inviting you most urgently. He comes from Babylon with twenty highly laden camels and everything that India and Persia and Syria, and even China, can only offer as their (most) precious of splendid spices, of stones, and of fabrics.

TEMPLAR. I am not buying anything.

DAJA. His people worship him like a prince. But that they call him the Wise Nathan rather than the Rich has often astonished me.

TEMPLAR. Perhaps rich and wise are the same to his people.

DAJA. Above all, however, they should have called him the Good. Because you cannot possibly imagine how good he is. When he learned how much Recha owed you, what all at that moment would he not have done for you, given (to you)!

TEMPLAR. Well!

DAJA. Try it and come and see (for yourself)!

TEMPLAR. What indeed? How quickly a moment is over?

DAJA. If he were not so good, would I have taken pleasure in being with him for so long? Are you perchance imagining (that) I don't feel my value as a Christian woman? For me, too, it was not forecast in a cradle song that I would only follow my husband to Palestine in order to (finally) bring up a Jew girl there. My dear husband was a noble horseman in Emperor Frederick's army -

TEMPLAR. By birth a Swiss on whom the honor and favor were bestowed of drowning in a river together with His Imperial Majesty. Woman! How many times have you already

told me that? Don't you really ever stop hounding me?

DAJA. Hounding! Dear God!

TEMPLAR. Yes, yes, hounding. Once and for all: I don't want to see you any more! Not hear (you)! Don't want to be reminded by you again and again of a deed of which I thought nothing, which when I think about it makes me wonder about myself. Still, I should not like to (have to) regret it. But look: if a similar case should occur again: it will be your fault if I will not act so quickly (again); if I inform myself beforehand - and let burn what is burning.

DAJA. My God prevent (that)!

TEMPLAR. From today on, at least do me the favor and no longer know me. I beg you for that. Also don't bother me with the father (1.: leave the father off my neck). (A) Jew is (a) Jew. I am a clumsy Swabian. The girl's picture has been out of my soul for a long time - if it ever was there.

DAJA. But yours is not out of hers.

TEMPLAR. But what should it be doing there? What should it?

DAJA. Who knows? People are not always what they seem.

TEMPLAR. But rarely something better. [He goes away.]

DAJA. But wait! Why are you hurrying?

TEMPLAR. Woman, do not make the palms odious to me underneath which I so much liked to roam at other times.

DAJA. So go, you German bear! Go then! And still I must not lose the trail of the beast. [She follows him from afar.]

END OF ACT ONE

Act Two

Scene 1

[Scene: The Sultan's Palace] [Saladin and Sittah are playing chess.]

SITTAH. Where are you with your thoughts, Saladin? How are you playing today?

SALADIN. Not well? I thought I was.

SITTAH. For me, and scarcely that. Take this move back.

SALADIN. Why?

SITTAH. The bishop will be in jeopardy.

SALADIN. (It) Is true. Well - that way (then)!

SITTAH. Then I (will) make a fork move.

SALADIN. Again true. - Check then!

SITTAH: What does that avail you? I interpose and you are as you have been.

SALADIN. Out of this strait I see well there is no escape without forfeiture. May it be! Take the bishop then!

SITTAH: I don't want him. I pass (him) by.

SALADIN. You are not giving me any present. You are more concerned with this space than with the bishop.

SITTAH. Could be.

SALADIN. (Beware that you) don't do your reckoning without the host (Transl. note: figure out the bill without considering how the inn-keeper will figure it. - German idiom). For, see! What is the bet that you were not expecting that?

SITTAH. Of course not. How was I to expect that you would be that tired of your queen?

SALADIN. I of my queen?

SITTAH. I see now well (that) today I am to win my thousand dinars, not a small naserin more.

SALADIN. How so?

SITTAH. Do (you) still (have to) ask! Because you want to lose purposely, with might and main. But in that I am not receiving my just due (1.: do not arrive at my account. German idiom) Because except that such a game is not the most entertaining, did I not always win the most from you whenever I lost? When did you ever not present me afterwards with double the stake in order to console me for the lost game?

SALADIN. Ah, see! So then you might have been losing on purpose, little sister?

SITTAH. At least (it) could well be that your generosity, my dear little brother, is at fault if I am not learning to play better.

SALADIN. We are getting away from the game. Make an end!

SITTAH. Does it remain like that? Well then: Check! And double check!

SALADIN. Well, indeed, I had not seen that discovered check which also simultaneously is overcoming my queen.

SITTAH. Could that still be remedied? Let (me) see.

SALADIN. No, no; just take the queen. I was never quite lucky with that piece.

SITTAH. Merely with that piece?

SALADIN. Off with it! That harms me nothing. Because in that way everything is protected again.

SITTAH. How politely one must deal with queens, my brother has taught me (only) too well. [She lets the queen stand.]

SALADIN. Take or take her not! I no longer have one.

SITTAH. Why take her? Check! Check!

SALADIN. Just go on.

SITTAH. Check! And check! And check!

SALADIN. And mate!

SITTAH. Not quite; you (can) still interpose the bishop, or whatever you want to do. No matter!

SALADIN. Quite right! You have won and Al-Hafi pays (off). Let him be sent for! At once! You were not so wrong, Sittah; I did not have my mind so entirely on the game (1.: was not so entirely with the game), was distracted. And then, who is it who is always giving us the smooth pieces? They recall nothing, depict nothing. Have I then been playing with the Imam? But what? Loss seeks an excuse. It was not the smooth stones, Sittah, that made me lose: your skill, your calm and alert glance....

SITTAH. By that you only want to dull the sting of losing. Enough - you were distracted, and more (so) than I.

SALADIN. Than you? What would have distracted you?

SITTAH. Certainly not your distraction! Oh Saladin, when will we ever again play as diligently (as we used to play)?

SALADIN. Then we (shall) play more zealously! Ah! Because the war is breaking out again, you think? Let it! Go to! I am not the one who has made the first move; I should have liked to extend the truce again; should have liked, liked at the same time to provide a good husband for my Sittah. And that must be Richard's brother; because (1.: isn't he?) he is Richard's brother.

SITTAH. If only you can praise your Richard!

SALADIN. If only then Richard's sister would have fallen to our brother Melek as (his) share: Ha! What a house together! Ha, - of the first, the best houses in the world the best! You hear, I am not loath to praise myself, I deem myself worthy of my friends. That would have produced men! That!

SITTAH. Have I not laughed at once at that beautiful dream? You do not know the Christians, don't want to know them. Their pride is to be Christians, not men. Because even what leavens superstition with mitigating aspects, - dating back to

their founder - they don't love because it is human. (They love it) because Christ teaches it, because Christ has done it. Lucky they that such a good man existed yet! Lucky they that they can take his virtue on faith and belief! But what virtue? Not his virtue, his name is to be propagated everywhere, is to desecrate the name of all good men, devour it. For the name, for the name only, they care.

SALADIN. You think that otherwise they would not demand that you, too, you, too, and Melek, be called Christians before you could love Christians as spouses?

SITTAH. Yes, indeed! As though from Christians only, as Christians, love were to be expected with which the Creator has endowed man and woman!

SALADIN. The Christians believe in more trash than that they could not also believe that, too! And yet, you err. The Templars, not the Christians, are at fault, are not at fault as Christians but as Templars. Because of them alone the thing is not working out (1.: is turning into nothing). They simply don't want to let go of Acca (transl. note: Ptolemais), which Richard's sister would have to bring as a dowry for our brother, Melek. (So) that the knights' advantage (might) not be jeopardized, they are playing monk, a foolish monk. And they have hardly been able to await the expiration of the truce, (hoping) that perhaps a swift fortuitous blow might succeed. Merry! Just keep it up! You gentlemen, just keep it up! Suits me well! If only all else were as it should be.

SITTAH. Well? (In) what else was I wrong? What else could put you out of countenance?

SALADIN. What always, always has put me out of countenance. I have been in Lebanon, with our father. He is still burdened with worries....

SITTAH. Oh woe!

SALADIN. He cannot work things out (1.: get through); things are going wrong (1.: it is jamming) everywhere; he is pinched (1.: it is lacking) soon here, soon there -

SITTAH. What is pinching? What is lacking?

SALADIN. What other than what I hardly deign to name? What when I have it seems so superfluous to me, and when I don't have it (seems) so indispensable. Where indeed is Al-Hafi keeping himself? Has no one gone for him? That troublesome, (that) cursed money! - Good, Hafi, that you are coming.

Scene 2

[The Dervish Al-Hafi. - Saladin. - Sittah]

AL-HAFI. Presumably the monies from Egypt have arrived? If only it is magificently plentiful.

SALADIN. Have you news?

AL-HAFI. I? I (have) not. I thought that I was to receive it here.

SALADIN. Pay Sittah a thousand dinars! [Walking up and down in thought.]

AL-HAFI. Pay! Instead of receive! Oh, lovely! That is for something still less than nothing. To Sittah? Again to Sittah? And (you have) been losing? Again lost at chess? There it still stands, the game!

SITTAH. Surely, you are not begrudging me my good fortune?

AL-HAFI. [Examining the chess board.] Begrudge not what? If - but then you know -

SITTAH. [Signaling him.] Hush! Hafi! Hush!

AL-HAFI. [His eyes still fastened on the game.] Begrudge it not above all to yourself first!

SITTAH. Al-Hafi, hush!

AL-HAFI. [To Sittah.] The white ones were yours? You are offering check?

SITTAH. Good that he has not heard anything!

AL-HAFI. Now it is his move?

SITTAH. [Stepping close towards him.] So get on and say that I can get my money.

AL-HAFI. [His eyes still fastened to the game] Yes, to be sure, you shall get it as you have always gotten it.

SITTAH. What? Are you mad?

AL-HAFI. But then the game really is not over. To be sure, you have not yet lost, Saladin.

SALADIN. [Hardly listening.] But yes! But yes! Pay! Pay!

AL-HAFI. Pay! Pay! There, to be sure, stands your queen.

SALADIN. [Still only half-listening] (It) doesn't count; (it) belongs no longer in the game.

SITTAH. So get on and say that I have only to send for the money.

AL-HAFI. [Still absorbed in the chess-board.] Understood: just as always. And even if, even if the queen doesn't count anything: because of that you are still not check-mate yet.

SALADIN. [Steps close to the table and overturns the game.] I am, want to be.

AL-HAFI. So that is how it is (1.: Yes, for sure)! Like game, like winnings! As it is won, thus it is paid.

SALADIN. [To Sittah.] What is he saying? What?

SITTAH. [Signalling to Hafi from time to time.] You know how he is. He likes to struggle, likes to let himself be beseeched, is probably even a little envious.

SALADIN. Really not of you? Not of my sister? What do I hear, Hafi? Envious? You?

AL-HAFI. Could be! Could be! I would rather like to have her wisdom for myself, would like to be as good myself as she (is).

SITTAH. Meanwhile he has still always paid correctly,

and will pay today, too. Only leave him be! Just go, Al-Hafi, go! I shall send for the money in good time.

AL-HAFI. No, I (will) no longer play along with the farce. (After all) he must learn (about) it sometime.

SALADIN. Who? And what?

SITTAH. Al-Hafi! Is that (how you keep) your promise? Are you keeping your word thus?

AL-HAFI. How was I to believe that it would go that far?

SALADIN. Well? Do I learn nothing?

SITTAH. I beg of you, Al-Hafi, be careful.

SALADIN. This is really strange! What (is it that) Sittah could want to beg so solemnly, so warmly from a stranger, from a dervish, rather than from me, from her brother? Al-Hafi, now I am commanding: Speak, Dervish!

SITTAH. Don't let a trifle, my brother, go closer to you(r) (heart) than it is worth. You know, I have been winning the same sum from you at chess at various times. And because I don't need the money now, because now money is not exactly all too plentiful in Hafi's exchequer - so the items of account have remained (unpaid). But don't you worry! I don't want to donate them either to you, my brother, nor to Hafi, nor to the exchequer.

AL-HAFI. Yes, if it were only that (alone)! That!

SITTAH. And more of the same. That, too, has remained in the exchequer which you once settled on me, has remained for a few months.

AL-HAFI. (And that is) still (1.: not everything).

SALADIN. Still not? Will you speak (up)?

AL-HAFI. (Ever) since we have been expecting the money from Egypt she has....

SITTAH. [To Saladin.] Why listen to him?

AL-HAFI. Not only received nothing....

SALADIN. Magnificent girl! (And she probably) has also

been advancing (money) to me on the side. (Is it) not (so)?

AL-HAFI. (She has) maintained the entire court; has borne your expenses all by herself.

SALADIN. Ha! That, that is my sister! [Embracing her.]

SITTAH. Who made me rich enough to be able to do that but you, my brother?

AL-HAFI. (Who) in good time, too, will be making her again as beggar-poor as he is himself.

SALADIN. I, poor? The brother, poor? When (will) I have more? When have I had less? One garment, one sword, one horse - and one God! What more do I need? When can I lack that? And yet, Al-Hafi, I could scold you.

SITTAH. Don't scold, my brother. If (only) I could also ease our father's worries in the same manner.

SALADIN. Ah! Ah! Now you are suddenly crushing my elation again! I, I lack nothing and can lack nothing. Say, what shall I do? Perhaps nothing will be coming from Egypt for a long while yet. Why that is so (1.: wherein that lies), God (only) knows. Certainly everything is still calm there. I will gladly skimp, curtail (expenses), retrench, (will) gladly submit (to that), if it affects only me, only me and no one else has to suffer by it. But what can that help? One horse, one garment, one sword I must still have. And of my God there can also not be any abatement. As it is, he is already satisfied with little enough - with my heart. I had counted very much, Al-Hafi, on the surplus in your exchequer.

AL-HAFI. Surplus? Tell me yourself whether you would not have had me impaled, at least strangled, if I had been caught by you with a surplus. As a matter of fact - on an embezzlement I could have taken a chance.

SALADIN. Well, but what shall we do then? Could you not borrow first from anyone else than from Sittah?

SITTAH. Would I have allowed, brother, to have that privilege to be taken away from me? From me by him? And even now I insist on it. I am not yet completely strapped (1.: on dry land).

SALADIN. Merely not completely! That is all we need (1.: that would still be lacking)! Go at once, make preparations, Hafi! Go, borrow, promise (the highest interest). Only, Hafi, don't borrow from those whom I have made rich. Because to borrow from these might be called demanding back. Go to the most miserly; they are the most likely to lend me (money). Because they know well how excellently their money will bring interest in my hands.

AL-HAFI. I know none of these.

SITTAH. I just remember that I heard, Hafi, that your friend has returned.

AL-HAFI. [Embarrassed.] Friend? My friend? Who might that be?

SITTAH. Your highly praised Jew.

AL-HAFI. Praised Jew? Highly, by me?

SITTAH. To whom God - I still remember the expression quite well that you yourself once used about him - to whom his God had allotted of all the goods of this world (both) the smallest and the greatest in such full measure.

AL-HAFI. Did I say that? What then did I mean by that?

SITTAH. The smallest: wealth. And the greatest: wisdom.

AL-HAFI. What? Of a Jew? Of a Jew I had said that?

SITTAH. <u>That</u>, you say, you did not say of your Nathan?

AL-HAFI. Oh yes, of <u>that</u> one! Of Nathan! That one did not come to my mind at all. Really? He has at last come home again? Well! Then perhaps things may not be so badly with him. Quite right; the people once called him the Wise! The Rich, too.

SITTAH. The Rich they call him now more than ever. The entire city is resounding (with tales of) what precious things, what treasures he has brought back.

AL-HAFI. Now it is the Rich again, so it will probably also be the Wise again.

SITTAH. What do you think, Hafi, if you were to approach that one?

AL-HAFI. And (to ask) what from him? Surely not to borrow? Yes, you don't know him (1.: there you know him). He lending! His wisdom is precisely that he lends to no one.

SITTAH. But at other times you have given (1.: made) me an entirely different picture of him.

AL-HAFI. If need be, he will lend you merchandise. But money, money? Money never and never. Of course he is also a Jew like there are not many Jews. He has brains; he knows how to live; plays chess well. But he distinguishes himself from all other Jews in the bad no less than in the good. On that one, on that one only do not count. To be sure, he gives to the poor and gives perhaps as aptly as Saladin, even if not quite as much, but quite as gladly, quite as entirely without discrimination. Jew and Christian and Mussulman and Parsee - they are all the same to him.

SITTAH. And such a man....

SALADIN. How does it happen, then, that I have never heard of this man?

SITTAH. He should not (be willing to) lend to Saladin? Not to Saladin who needs only for others, not for himself?

AL-HAFI. There you see now rightaway again the Jew, the completely debased Jew! Believe me, though! He is so jealous of your giving, so envious! He would like to draw entirely for himself alone every (blessing for) recompense from God that is said (anywhere) in the world. He is not lending to anyone merely because of the one reason that he always might have something to give. Because charity is prescribed for him in the Mosaic law, but courtesy, on the other hand, is not prescribed, (his) charity makes him the most discourteous fellow in the world. It is a fact that for quite some time now I have been on somewhat bad terms with him (1.: somewhere tight across the foot with him); however, don't think that because of that I am not doing him justice. He is good for everything, only not for this, only really not for this. And really, I want to be on my way forthwith,

(want to) go rightaway, knock at doors.... I just remember now a Moor who is (both) rich and miserly. I am going, I am going.

SITTAH. What is your hurry, Hafi?

SALADIN. Leave him! Leave him!

Scene 3

[Sittah. - Saladin.]

SITTAH. Really, he is hurrying as though he would really like to escape from me. What does that mean? Has he really been deceiving himself in him or - would he merely like to deceive us?

SALADIN. What? You ask me that? I don't even know of whom the question was and am hearing of your Jew, your Nathan, for the first time today.

SITTAH. Is it possible? That a man should have remained so (completely) hidden from you of whom they are saying that he has Solomon's and David's tombs explored and knew to resolve their seals by powerful magic words? From them (they say) he brought from time to time immeasurable riches to the daylight, (riches) that betokened no lesser source.

SALADIN. If this man has his riches from graves then they were certainly not Solomon's, not David's graves. Fools lay buried there!

SITTAH. Or evildoers! (Then) too the source of his riches is far more fruitful, more inexhaustible, than such a grave full of mammon.

SALADIN. Because he trades as I have heard.

SITTAH. He drives his beast of burden on all streets, moves through all deserts; his ships lie in all ports. Al-Hafi himself once told me that and added, full of glee, how grandly, how nobly this, his friend was applying what so wisely and industriously he did not deem too small to acquire; (and he) add(ed) how free from prejudices his spirit was, how open his heart was to every virtue (and) how receptive to every beauty.

SALADIN. And yet, just now Hafi was speaking so uncertainly, so coldly of him.

SITTAH. Coldly - well hardly. With embarrassment. As though he deemed it dangerous to praise him and (still) did not want to find fault with him undeservedly. What ? Or could it really be that even the best one of a people cannot quite escape his people? That actually Al-Hafi would have to be ashamed of his friend in that respect (1.: from that side)? Be that as it may! Be the Jew more or less as Jew - let him only be rich: (that is) enough for us!

SALADIN. But you don't want to take by force what is his, sister?

SITTAH. Yes, what do you mean, by force? With fire and sword? No, no, what force does it take with the weak ones but their weakness? - But for now just come along to my harem to listen to a singer whom I bought only yesterday. Perhaps in the meantime a plan will ripen in me, a plan that I have about that Nathan. Come!

Scene 4

[Scene: In Front of Nathan's House at the Edge of the Palms.]

[Recha and Nathan are coming from the house. Daja joins them.]

RECHA. You have delayed very long, my father. It isn't likely that he can still be found (there).

NATHAN. Well, well; even if no longer here, here underneath the palms, then elsewhere. Be only calm now. Look! Is not Daja approaching us yonder?

RECHA. (I am) quite sure that she will have lost him.

NATHAN. Likely too (that she has) not.

RECHA. Else she would be coming quicker.

NATHAN. She probably has not seen us yet....

RECHA. Now she is beholding us.

NATHAN. And is doubling her steps. Look! Pray be calm! Calm!

RECHA. Would you really (want to) have a daughter who would be calm here (f.: under such circumstances)? Let herself be unconcerned (about the one) whose good deed was her life? Her life which she only loves so much because she owes to you first.

NATHAN. I would not want you other than you are even if I knew that still something entirely different were stirring in your soul.

RECHA. What, my father?

NATHAN. You ask me? So bashfully, me? Whatever is going on inside of you is nature and innocence. Don't let it cause you worry. Me, me it isn't causing any. Only promise me: when some day your heart should declare itself more audibly - don't conceal its wishes from me.

RECHA. Even the possibility of preferring to veil my heart from you makes me tremble.

NATHAN. No more about that! That is settled once and for all. But, indeed, here is Daja. Well?

DAJA. He is still walking back and forth here underneath the palms and presently will be coming around that wall. Look, there he comes!

RECHA. Ah! And seems undecided whither? Whether to go further? Whether down (that way)? Whether to the right? Whether to the left?

DAJA. No, no; he surely takes (1.: makes) the route to the cloister quite frequently, and therefore must pass by here. What is the bet?

RECHA. Right! Right! Have you already been talking to him? And how is he today?

DAJA. As always.

NATHAN. Then please hasten so that he may not see you here. Step farther back. Still better, go all the way inside.

RECHA. Only one more glimpse! Ah, the hedge that is stealing him from me.

DAJA. Come! Come! Your father is quite right. You are running the risk that he will turn back on the spot if he sees you.

RECHA. Ah! The hedge!

NATHAN. And if he suddenly emerges from it, then he can't help but see you. Therefore, pray go!

DAJA. Come! Come! I know a window from which we can observe them.

RECHA. Indeed? [Both enter the house.]

Scene 5

[Nathan and soon thereafter, the Templar.]

NATHAN. I almost shrink from the strange fellow. His rough virtue almost startles me. That a man should be able to perplex another man that much! Ha! He is coming. By God! A youth just like a (mature) man. I like it well, that good, insubmissive look! The sturdy gait! Only the shell can be bitter - the core certainly is not. Where have I seen something similar? - Forgive, noble Frank....

TEMPLAR. What?

NATHAN. Permit....

TEMPLAR. What, Jew? What?

NATHAN. That I make bold to accost you.

TEMPLAR. Can I prevent it? But only make it brief.

NATHAN. Delay and do not rush so haughtily, not so contemptuously, away from a man whom you have made your debtor for (all) eternity.

TEMPLAR. How that? Ah, I almost guess it. Not? You are....

NATHAN. I am called Nathan, am the father of the girl

whom your magnanimity rescued from the fire and I come....

TEMPLAR. If for the purpose of thanking - save it! I have already had to suffer too much for that trifle of thanks. Above all, you, you owe me absolutely nothing. Because did I know that that girl was your daughter? It is the Templar's duty to come to the rescue of the first comer whose distress he sees. My life was burdensome to me, anyway, at that moment. Gladly, most gladly did I seize the opportunity of taking a chance (1.: taking a risk on the redoubt) on it for another life, for another, even if it might only be the life of a Jewess.

NATHAN. Grand! Grand and abominable! But this turn is understandable (1.: can bethink itself). The modest nobleness flees behind the abominable in order to escape admiration. But when it rejects the sacrifice of admiration in that manner, what kind of sacrifices then does it reject to a lesser degree? Knight, if you were not a stranger here and not a prisoner I would not be asking you so boldly. Say, command, with what can I serve you?

TEMPLAR. You? With nothing.

NATHAN. I am a rich man.

TEMPLAR. The richer Jew to me has never been the better Jew.

NATHAN. May you then therefore not make use of what he has in spite of that? Not make use of his wealth?

TEMPLAR. Well, then, that I do not want to renounce altogether, either; not for my mantle's sake. As soon as that is wholly and completely worn out, will no longer hold stitching nor patches (1.: rag), I shall come and borrow from you cloth or money for a new one. Don't suddenly look so grim! You are still safe; it has not reached that point yet. You can see that it is still fairly intact. Only the one edge here has an ugly spot; it is scorched. And it got that when I carried your daughter through the fire.

NATHAN. [Who is reaching for the edge of the mantle and looks at it.] Isn't it strange that such a bad spot, that such a mark of a burn speaks a better testimonial for the man than his own mouth. I should like to kiss it right away - that spot!

Ah forgive (me)! I did it involuntarily.

TEMPLAR. What?

NATHAN. A tear fell on it.

TEMPLAR. (It) doesn't matter! It has had more drops (fall on it). [Aside.] But soon this Jew will begin to embarrass me.

NATHAN. Would you not be kind enough and some time also send your mantle to my girl?

TEMPLAR. For what purpose (1.: what to do with it)?

NATHAN. To press her mouth, too, on that spot. Because she is now doubtlessly craving in vain to embrace your knees.

TEMPLAR. But, Jew - You are called Nathan? But, Nathan - you put your words very - very well - very pointedly - I am embarrassed. To be sure. I should have....

NATHAN. Simulate and dissimulate whichever way you want. I find you out there here too. You were too good, too honorable to be more polite. The girl, all feelings; the feminine emissary, all officiousness; the father, far away. You were taking care of her good name, (you) fled (putting) her to the test, fled in order not to win (a victory). For that, too, I thank you.

TEMPLAR. I must confess, you know how Templars are supposed to think.

NATHAN. Only Templars? Supposed to only? And only because the rules of the Order require it? I know how good men think, know that all countries produce good men.

TEMPLAR. With differences still, I hope?

NATHAN. Yes, indeed; different in color, in garments, in shape.

TEMPLAR. And here sometimes more, sometimes less than elsewhere.

NATHAN. That difference is unimportant (1.: With that difference it is not from far). The great man everywhere needs much soil, and several (of them), planted too closely

together, only smash each other's branches. Average goods like us, however, are found in multitudes everywhere. Only the one must not criticize the other; only, people must bear and forebear (1.: must the gnarl nicely tolerate the knob. - Archaic German idiom); only must a hillock not pretend presumptuously that it alone did not spring from the earth.

TEMPLAR. Very well said! But do you also know the people who first propagated that (kind of) man-caviling? Do you know, Nathan, what people were the first to call themselves the chosen people? What if I now could not hate, but, to be sure, could not restrain myself from despising that people because of their conceit? Its conceit that it bequeathed to Christian and Mussulman: only its God was the right God! You are startled, that I, a Christian,a Templar am speaking like that? When and where has the pious mania of presuming to have the better God, of trying to force that better God upon the entire world, shown itself more in its blackest form than here, than now? Anyone for whom here, now the scales (1.: blinds are not dropping from his eyes.... But let be blind who wants (to be)! Forget what I have said, and leave me (be)! [Wants to leave.]

NATHAN. Ha! You don't know how much more firmly I shall now press myself towards you. Come, we must, must be friends! Despise my people as much as you want. We have, both of us, not selected our own people. Are we our people? And what does people mean? Are Christian and Jew first Christian and Jew, (rather) than man? Ah! If in you I had found one more (human being) to whom it is sufficient to be called a man!

TEMPLAR. Yes, by God, that you have, Nathan! That you have! (Give me) your hand! I am ashamed to have misjudged you for a moment.

NATHAN. And I am proud of it. Only a worthless man misjudges rarely.

TEMPLAR. And the rare man scarcely forgets. Nathan, indeed we must, must become friends.

NATHAN. Are already. How my Recha will rejoice! And ah! What happy future is opening itself to my gazes! Know

her only first (f.: If you only knew her)!

TEMPLAR. I am burning with the desire. - Who comes rushing from your house? Is it not her Daja?

NATHAN. Yes, indeed. (And) so frightened?

TEMPLAR. Our Recha has not met with anything, has she?

Scene 6

[NATHAN. The Templar, and Daja, in haste.]

DAJA. Nathan! Nathan!

NATHAN. Well?

DAJA. Forgive, noble knight, that I must interrupt you.

NATHAN. Well, what is it?

TEMPLAR. What is it?

DAJA. The Sultan has sent (for you). The Sultan wants to speak with you. God, the Sultan!

NATHAN. Me? The Sultan? He is probably eager to see what new things I have brought with me. Just say that only little or nothing at all has been unpacked as yet.

DAJA. No, no; he does not want to see anything, he wants to talk to you, you personally, and soon, as quickly as you can.

NATHAN. I shall be coming. Just go again, go!

DAJA. Please don't be angry (1.: take it for evil), worshipful knight. God, we are so full of apprehension about what the Sultan may want.

NATHAN. That will show itself (presently). Go, only go!

Scene 7

[Nathan and the Templar.]

TEMPLAR. So you don't know him yet? I mean, personally?

NATHAN. That Saladin? Not yet. I have not avoided him, (and) I have not sought to know him. His general reputation spoke much too well of him that I would not have wanted rather to believe than to see. But now - if that is really so (1.: if otherwise this is not so) - he has by sparing your life....

TEMPLAR. Yes, to be sure, that is true. The life I am living is his present.

NATHAN. By which he bestowed on me a twofold life. That has changed everything between us, has suddenly thrown a rope around me that binds me to his service forever. Hardly, yes, hardly, can I now await that which he will order me to do first. I am prepared for everything, am prepared to confess to him that I feel that way (1.: am that) because of you.

TEMPLAR. Up to now I myself have been unable to thank him, as often as I yet have stepped into his path. The impression which I made upon him came as quickly as it disappeared again quickly. Who knows whether he even remembers me. And yet he must, at least once more, remember me, in order to decide my ultimate (1.: wholly) fate. Not enough that by his command I still am, by his will am still alive: I must now also expect to learn from him how (1.: according to whose will) I am to live.

NATHAN. Quite so (1.: nothing else); all the more reason that I must make haste (1.: will not delay. Perhaps a word will fall which will give me an opportunity to mention you (1.: come to you). Permit, forgive, I am hastening (away). When, when, indeed, shall we be seeing you with us?

TEMPLAR. As soon as I may.

NATHAN. As soon as you want.

TEMPLAR. Today still.

NATHAN. And your name? I must ask you.

TEMPLAR. My name was - is Curd von Stauffen. - Curd!

NATHAN. Von Stauffen? Of that family probably several already....

TEMPLAR. Oh yes! There have been here several of that

family are already rotting here. My uncle himself, - my father, I want to say - But why is your gaze at me becoming more and more piercing?

NATHAN. Oh nothing! Oh nothing! How could I tire of looking at you?

TEMPLAR. Therefore, I leave you first. The gaze of the explorer often (1.: not seldom) has found more than he desired to find. I am afraid of that, Nathan. Let time and not curiosity make us get acquainted gradually. [Exits.]

NATHAN. [Gazing after him in astonishment.] "The explorer often (1.: not seldom) has found more than he desired to find." Is it not as though he had been reading in my soul! Actually indeed! That could happen to me too. Not only Wolf's figure, Wolf's gait; his voice, too. So perfectly, in the (same) manner) Wolf even used to toss his head, Wolf even carried his sword in his arm, Wolf used to stroke his eyebrows with his hand, as though he wanted to conceal the fire of his looks. How such deeply engraved pictures can sleep in us for a long time until a word, a sound awakens them! Von Stauffen! Quite right, quite right, Filnek and Stauffen. I shall soon know about that more precisely; soon. But first (off) to that Saladin. But what? Is not Daja eavesdropping there? Well, then, just come closer, Daja.

Scene 8

[Daja. - Nathan.]

NATHAN. What is the bet? Now there is already something entirely different pressing on the hearts of both of you than to learn what Saladin wants of me.

DAJA. Do you blame her? You were just beginning to talk to him more confidentially, when the Sultan's message scared us away from the window.

NATHAN. Well, then, tell her that she may expect him any moment.

DAJA. For certain? For certain.

NATHAN. But surely I can rely on you, Daja? Be on your guard, I beg of you. You will not rue it. Even your conscience will be salved (1.: find its account). Only don't spill anything for me, in my plan. Speak and ask with modesty only, with restraint....

DAJA. That you still first should have to remind (me) of such things! I am going; but be you on your way too. Because, see! I really believe a second messenger from the Sultan is coming here, Al-Hafi, your dervish. [She exits.]

Scene 9

[Nathan. - Al-Hafi.]

AL- HAFI. Ha! Ha! I just wanted to return to you.

NATHAN. Is it, then, so pressing? What, then, does he want from me?

AL-HAFI. Who?

NATHAN. Saladin. - I am coming, I am coming.

AL-HAFI. To whom? To Saladin?

NATHAN. Isn't Saladin sending you?

AL-HAFI. Me? No. Then he has already sent (for you)?

NATHAN. Yes, indeed, he has.

AL-HAFI. Well, then, it is true.

NATHAN. What? What is true?

AL -HAFI. That - I am not guilty, God knows, it is not my fault. What have I not said about you, lied, in order to avert it!

NATHAN. To avert what? What is true?

AL-HAFI. That you have now become his treasurer (1.: Defterdar). I feel sorry for you. But I don't want to watch it. This very hour I am leaving, going. You have already heard whither, and (you) know the way. If you have something to be delivered along the way, tell me; I am at your

service. Of course, it must not be more than what a naked one (f.: pilgrim) can drag along with him. I am going, (as I have) said, presently.

NATHAN. But (take) counsel with yourself, Al-Hafi. Consider that as yet I know nothing at all. What are you prattling here?

AL-HAFI. You are surely going to bring them along right away, the purses?

NATHAN. Purses?

AL-HAFI. Well, the money that you are to advance to Saladin.

NATHAN. And that is all (1.: and further is nothing)?

AL-HAFI. Am I, indeed, supposed to watch how from day to day he will hollow you out down to the toes (f.: suck out your marrow)? Am I indeed supposed to watch how extravagance borrows from wise charity's otherwise never empty barns so long and keeps borrowing and borrowing until finally the poor home-mice, too, will starve inside? Do you perhaps imagine (that he) who needs your money would be likely to follow your counsel, too? Indeed, follow your counsel! When has Saladin (ever) allowed himself to be counseled? Just think, Nathan, what only just now has happened to me.

NATHAN. Well?

AL-HAFI. Here I just come to him, just after he had played chess with his sister. Sittah doesn't play badly, and the game that Saladin believed lost, had given up (as lost) - it still stood there undisturbed (1.: wholly). I take a look and see that the game is not by any means (1.: for a long time) lost.

NATHAN. Hey! That was a find for you!

AL-HAFI. He needed only to move with the king next to the pawn, after her check. If I could only show it to you right here!

NATHAN. Oh, I trust you!

AL-HAFI. Because in that way the castle obtained a (clear)

course and she would have been finished. - All I now want to show him and call to his attention is.... Think!

NATHAN; He does not share your opinion?

AL-HAFI. He does not even listen to me and contempuously upsets the entire game (1.: throws the entire game into clumps).

NATHAN. Is that possible?

AL-HAFI. And says: he simply wanted to be check-mate. He wanted (to be)! Do you call that playing?

NATHAN. Hardly, indeed; (should be) called playing with the game.

AL-HAFI. All the same it wasn't worth a farthing (1.: an empty nut).

NATHAN. Money hither, money thither! That is the least. But not to be listening to you at all! About a point of such importance not even to listen to you. Not to admire your eagle's glance! That, that cries for revenge, (does it) not?

AL-HAFI. Bah, what! I am only telling you that in that way so that you can see what kind of a man (1.: head) he is. In short, I can no longer stand it with him. Here I am running around now to all the dirty Moors and asking who wants to lend to him. I who have never begged for myself, am now supposed to borrow for others. Borrowing is not much better than begging: just as lending, lending on interest is not much better than stealing. Among my Ghebers on the Ganges I need (do) neither, and do not have to be a tool of either. On the Ganges, on the Ganges only are there people. Here you are the only one who would still be worthy of living on the Ganges. Do you want to come along? Suddenly leave him completely in the lurch with the whole trash - that trash (that) is all he cares for? By and by he will cheat you out of it anyway. (But) this way worry and turmoil would be over with a single stroke. I'll get you a dervish's monk (1.: Delk). Come! Come!

NATHAN. I should think, however, that that would always be our last out (1.: would always remain for us). But, Al-Hafi, I want to think it over. Wait....

AL-HAFI. Think it over? No - something like that is not (to be) thought over.

NATHAN. Only until I return from the Sultan, until I first take leave....

AL-HAFI. He who think it over is looking for reasons for not having to (do something). He who cannot decide on the spur of the moment (1.: by sudden explosion and fall. German colloquialism) to live for himself, lives the slave of others. As you wish! Farewell! As it seems well to you! My way lies there, and yours here.

NATHAN. Al-Hafi! But you will surely first settle your accounts (1.: settle what's yours)?

AL-HAFI. Oh, nonsense! The (cash) balance of my exchequer is not worth the counting; and for my accounting voucher - you or Sittah. Farewell! [Exits.]

NATHAN. [Gazing after him.] That I vouch for! - Unrestrained, good, noble - what do I call him? The true beggar is after all solely and alone the true king! [Exits to the other side.]

Act Three

Scene 1

[Scene: In Nathan's House.] [Recha. - Daja.]

RECHA. How, Daja, did my father express himself? I might expect him any moment That sounds - does it not - as though he would appear as soon as possible? But how many moments have already passed! Oh, well, who thinks of past onces? I want to live solely in the next moment. The one that brings him will still come some time.

DAJA. Oh, that cursed message from the Sultan! Because without it Nathan surely would have brought him along with him right away.

RECHA. And when it will have arrived, that moment; when then my one warmest, most fervent wish shall have been fulfilled: what then? What then?

DAJA. What then? Then I hope that the warmest one of my wishes, too, may be fulfilled.

RECHA. What will, then, take its place in my bosom that already has unlearned to dilate without one wish predominating among all the others? Nothing? Ah, I am frightened!

DAJA. My, my wish will then take the place of the fulfilled one; mine. My wish to know you in Europe, in hands that are worthy of you.

RECHA. You are wrong. (That) which makes this wish yours, that very same prevents it from ever becoming mine. You are drawn by your fatherland, and mine, mine should not keep me? A picture of your (loved) ones that (is) not yet extinguished in your soul should have more power than those whom I can see and touch (1.: grasp) and hear, my (loved) ones?

DAJA. Balk as much as you want! The ways of heaven are

heaven's ways. And if now it should be your rescuer himself through whom his God, whose warrior he is, should want to lead you to the country, to the people, for whom you were born?

RECHA. Daja! What are you talking (about) again here, dear Daja! You surely have your special curious ideas! "His God! Whose warrior he is!" Who owns God? What kind of a God is that who is owned by a man? (Who) must let someone fight for Him? And does one actually know for which lump of earth one is born, if it isn't (1.: if one is not) for the one on which one is born? If my father should hear you (talking) like that! What has he done to you, (that you) always merely pretend to me (that) my happiness was to be as far away from him as possible? What did he do to you (that you) like to mix the seed of reason that he so proudly strewed into my soul with your country's weed or flowers? Dear, dear Daja, he simply doesn't want your motley flowers on my soil! And I must tell you, I myself feel my soil debilitated, so wasted by your flowers - no matter how beautifully you fashion them; (I) feel myself so numbed, so dizzied by their scent, (their) sweet-sour scent! Your brain is better accustomed to that. I don't blame the stronger nerves that (can) stand it for that. Only it does not agree with me; and already your angel - a little more (1.: lacked) (and) he would have made a fool out of me. I am still ashamed before my father because of that farce!

DAJA. Farce! As though reason were at home only here! Farce! Farce! If only I were allowed to talk.

RECHA. Aren't you allowed? When have I not been all ears, as often as it pleased you to entertain me with (your tales of) the heroes of your faith? Have I not always gladly paid tribute (1.: admiration) to their deeds and (shed) tears for their sufferings. Their faith, of course, never seemed to me the most heroic of their (aspects). But all the more consoling for me was the doctrine that submission to God does not depend by any manner of means on our concept of God. Dear Daja, that (is what) my father has been telling us so often; on what you yourself have so often agreed with him; why, then, are you undermining by yourself what you have been building up jointly with him? Dear Daja, that is not the kind of (1.: no)

conversation with which we (could spend our time) best while awaiting (1.: looking forward to) our friend. For me, however, yes, (f.: it might be, after all) (1.: only) I am infinitely more concerned whether he, too,.... Listen Daja! Isn't someone (1.: something) coming to our door? If it were he! Listen!

Scene 2

[Recha. - Daja. - The Templar, for whom someone outside is opening the door with the words] Just enter here!

RECHA. [Startled, regains her composure and wants to drop at his feet.] It is he! My savior, ah!

TEMPLAR. To avoid this very thing I have been delaying my appearance for such a long time (1.: I appeared only so late); and yet -

RECHA. I really only want to thank God once more at the feet of this proud man, not the man. The man wants no thanks, wants it as little as the water pail wants it that showed itself so busy while (the fire) was being extinguished. (The water pail) that allowed itself to be filled, allowed itself to be emptied, just like that (1.: for me nothing, for you nothing. - German colloquialism): thus, also, the man. He,too,was pushed into the blaze like that; then by accident I dropped into his arm; then I remained in his arms accidentally, just like a spark on his mantle, until again (something), I don't know what, tossed both of us out of the blaze. What is there here to thank? In Europe wine drives (men) to far stranger (1.: other) deeds. Templars must after all (1.: now once) act that way, must fetch from the fire as well as from the water like somewhat better trained dogs.

TEMPLAR. [Who all this time has been looking at her with astonishment and uneasiness.] Oh Daja, Daja, if in moments of grief and bitterness (1.: gall) I have been moody and treated you badly - why (did you have to) inform her of every foolishness that escaped my tongue. That would be (1.: mean) taking too harsh a revenge, Daja. But if only from now on you will represent me better with her.

DAJA. I think, Sir, I don't think that these small pricks thrown at her heart have harmed you much there.

TEMPLAR. Good, lovely child! How (much) indeed, is my soul divided (f.: torn) between eye and ear! That was not the girl, no, no, that was not she whom I carried from the fire! Because who could have known that one and not (have) carried her from the fire. Who would have waited for me? However, fright distorts - [Pause during which he is seemingly lost in gazing at her.]

RECHA. I, however, find you still the same. [He remains in the same position as above until Recha continues to talk in order to interrupt him in his starting at her.] Well, Sir, pray tell us where you have been for so long? I might almost also ask where you are now?

TEMPLAR. I am - where perhaps I should not be.

RECHA. Where (have) you been? Also, where perhaps you should not have been? That is not good.

TEMPLAR. On - on - what is the name of the mountain? On (Mount) Sinai.

RECHA. On (Mount) Sinai? Ah, beautiful! Now after all I can learn reliably whether it is true....

TEMPLAR. What? What? Whether 'tis true that the place can still be seen there where Moses was standing before God when....

RECHA. Well, not exactly that; because wherever he stood, he was standing before God. And of that I already know enough (1.: to satisfaction). Whether 'tis true. I should only like to learn from you that it is not by far as troublesome to ascend that mountain as to descend? Because see: as many mountains as I have climbed: It has been just the opposite. Well, Sir? What? You are turning away from me? Do you not want to see (f.: look at) me?

TEMPLAR. Because I want to hear you.

RECHA. Because you don't want me to notice that you are smiling at my silliness; that you are smiling because (1.: how) I don't know to ask you anything more important about this

holiest of all mountains (1.: holy mountain of mountains)? Is that not so?

TEMPLAR. So after all I must look again into your eyes. What? You are casting them down now? Now you (are the one who) is stifling a smile? How I only want to read first in features, in doubtful features, what I hear so distinctly what you are telling me so audibly or keeping a secret from me? Ah, Recha! Recha! How he spoke so truly when he said: "If you only knew her!"

RECHA. Who has (said that) ? Of whom? Said that to you?

TEMPLAR. "If you only knew her!" your father said to me, of you.

DAJA. And perhaps not I, also? Not I, then, too?

TEMPLAR. But where is he? Where, indeed, is your father? Is he still with the Sultan?

DAJA. Without doubt.

TEMPLAR. Still, still there? Oh, how forgetful I am! No, no; He is probably down there by the cloister waiting (for) me; quite certainly. Thus, I believe, we arranged it. Permit (me)! I (shall) go, I (shall) fetch him....

DAJA. That is my business. Remain, Sir, remain. I shall bring him without delay.

TEMPLAR. Don't (1.: not so)! Don't (1.: not so). He is looking forward to (f.: expecting) me; not you. Moreover, he could easily....who knows? He could easily with the Sultan - you don't know the Sultan - easily have come to grief (1.: into a predicament). Believe me: there might be (1.: it has) danger if I don't go!

RECHA. Danger? What kind of danger?

TEMPLAR. Danger for me, for you, for him, if I do not go quickly, quickly. [Exits.]

Scene 3

[Recha. - Daja.]

RECHA. What is that, Daja? So quickly? What is coming over him? What startled him? What is chasing him?

DAJA. Just leave be, leave be! I think it is not a bad sign.

RECHA. Sign? And of what?

DAJA. That something is going on inside (of him). It is boiling and is not supposed to boil over. Leave him only be. Now it is your turn.

RECHA. What is my turn? You are, like him, becoming incomprehensible to me.

DAJA. Soon you will be able to repay him all the anxiety that he has caused you. But just don't be all too severe now, not all too eager for revenge.

RECHA. What you are talking about, only you know.

DAJA. And are you really already so calm again?

RECHA. That I am; that I am.

DAJA. Confess, at least, that you are enjoying his distraction and that you owe to his anxiety whatever calm you are now enjoying.

RECHA. Wholly involuntarily! Because the most I could confess to you would be that to me - to me myself it appears strange how such a storm in my heart could be suddenly followed by such a calm. Looking intently (1.: fully) at him, his conversation, the sound of his voice (1.: sound) have....

DAJA. Satiated already?

RECHA. I don't exactly want to say satiated; no, not by far -

DAJA. Merely appeased the ravenous hunger.

RECHA. Well, yes, if you want to put it that way.

DAJA. I am not putting it that way.

RECHA. He will remain precious to me forever, always more precious to me forever than my life, even if my pulse should no longer change at the mere (mention) of his name, (even if) my heart no longer should beat faster, more strongly, each time I think of him. What am I blabbing? Come, come, dear Daja, again to the window that overlooks the palms.

DAJA. So it is then really not quite appeased, that ravenous hunger?

RECHA. Now I shall also see the palms again, not only him underneath palms.

DAJA. This present (1.: now) coolness will probably only start a new fever.

RECHA. What coolness? I am not cold. In truth, I am not observing with less pleasure what I am observing calmly.

Scene 4

[Scene: An Audience Chamber in Saladin's Palace.] [Saladin. - Sittah]

SALADIN. [While entering - talking in the direction of the door] Bring the Jew right in here (1.: hither) as soon as he arrives. He does not exactly seem to be in too much of a hurry.

SITTAH. Probably he was also not available, could not be found right away.

SALADIN. Sister! Sister!

SITTAH. But you are acting as though a battle were at hand for you.

SALADIN. And at that with weapons that I have not learned to wield. I am to stand up, am to procure, am to set traps, am to mislead (1.: lead one on the ice). When would I have been able to do that? Where would I have learned that? And I should (do) all that, ah, for what? To bait the hook for money! Money! To extort by intimidation money, money, from a Jew! Money! To such petty cunning I should have been

brought finally in order to procure for myself of all the trifles the most trifling?

SITTAH. Every trifle, if rejected too much, avenges itself, brother.

SALADIN. Unfortunately true. And if now this Jew actually should be (1.: Is) the good, reasonable man as the dervish once described him to you?

SITTAH. Oh, well, then! What difference does it, then, make (1.: what, then, will be the emergency. Archaic German idiom) ! The trap, to be sure, is set only for the miserly, cagey, timorous Jew, not for the good, not for the wise man. That one is ours anyway, without (a) trap. The pleasure of hearing how such a man will get out of the trap (set for him); with what saucy strength either he will tear the ropes, or too with what sly prudence he will wiggle past the nets; that pleasure you will have in the bargain (1.: on top).

SALADIN. Well, that is true. Certainly, I am looking forward to it with pleasure.

SITTAH. Thus, then, also nothing further can embarrass you. Because if he is merely one of many (1.: out of the multitude), (if) he is only a Jew like (other) Jews, towards him you surely won't be ashamed to appear the way he believes all people (to be)? Instead, he who shows himself to him (as a) better (man) - appears to him as a self-complacent fool, as a buffoon.

SALADIN. So in that case (1.: then) I must perhaps act badly in order that the evil one might not think evil of me.

SITTAH. Indeed, if you call using each thing according to its character, acting evilly.

SALADIN. What could a woman's mind (1.: head) have invented for which it would not know an excuse.

SITTAH. Excuse!

SALADIN. That fine, pointed thing, I am only afraid, will break in my clumsy hands! Something like that wants to be executed just as (finely) as it was invented. With all the cunning, nimbleness. But let it only come, let it! I dance as I

can; and would rather like to do it worse still than better.

SITTAH. Don't only you have too little faith in yourself! I vouch for you! If you only want to! That men of your like still would like to persuade us that only their sword, their sword only had brought them that far. Of course the lion is ashamed when he goes hunting with the fox, is ashamed of the fox, not of the cunning.

SALADIN. And that women only would like so much to drag man down to their level (1.: to have man down with them)! Go, only go! I believe that I have mastered my lesson.

SITTAH. What? I am to leave?

SALADIN. You did not want to stay, (did you)?

SITTAH. If not stay....stay within your sight. But here in the ante-chamber.

SALADIN. To eavesdrop there? Not that either, sister, if I am to stand the test. Away, away! The curtain is rustling; he is arriving! But be sure that you don't remain! I shall look into that. [While she is leaving through one door, Nathan enters by the other and Saladin has seated himself.]

Scene 5

[Saladin. - Nathan.]

SALADIN. Step closer, Jew! Closer! Only all the way (over) here! Only without fear!

NATHAN. That be reserved (1.: remain) for your enemy!

SALADIN. You call yourself Nathan?

NATHAN. Yes.

SALADIN. The Wise Nathan?

NATHAN. No.

SALADIN. Indeed! If you don't call yourself that - the people are calling you (that).

NATHAN. Can be, the people.

SALADIN. You don't believe, do you, that I am thinking contemptuously of the people's voice? I have been wishing for a long time to make the acquaintance of the man whom they call the Wise.

NATHAN. And if they should be calling him that for mockery? If for the people wise would mean nothing more than prudent? And prudent only he who understands well (to gain) his advantage?

SALADIN. His true advantage - is that not what you mean?

NATHAN. Then really the most prudent would be - the most selfish. Then of course prudent and wise would be only one.

SALADIN. I heard you prove that which you want to contradict. Of man's true advantages - of which people are unaware - you are aware. At least you sought to be aware of. (You) have reflected about (it); that, too, alone already makes the Wise one.

NATHAN. Which is what everyone considers himself to be.

SALADIN. Enough now of modesty! Because it merely disgusts to hear it constantly where one is expecting sober reason. [He jumps up.] Let us come to the matter! But, but sincerely, Jew, sincerely!

NATHAN. Sultan, I surely intend to serve you so that I shall remain worthy of your further patronage (1.: customership).

SALADIN. Serve? How?

NATHAN. You shall have the best of everything; shall have it at the cheapest price.

SALADIN; What are you speaking of? Surely not of your wares? The haggling, in good time, will be done by my sister. [Aside.] That for the eavesdropper! [Aloud.] I have nothing to do with the trader.

NATHAN. Then without doubt you will want to know what about the enemy - I might have noticed, encountered. If I am

to (say it) frankly.

SALADIN. At that I have not been aiming, either, with you. About that I already know as much as I need. In brief -

NATHAN. Command, Sultan.

SALADIN. I desire instruction from you in something entirely different, something entirely different. Inasmuch then as you are so wise, so pray, tell me - which (1.: what kind of) faith, which law has appealed to you (1.: enlightened) most?

NATHAN. Sultan, I am a Jew.

SALADIN. And I (am) a Mussulman. The Christian is in between us. Of these three religions though only one can be the true one. A man like you does not remain rooted (1.: (1.: standing) where accident of birth has thrown him; or, if he remains, he remains because of understanding, (because of) reasons, (because of) choice of the better. Well, then! Communicate, then, to me your insight. Let me hear the reasons, which to fathom out I have not had the time. Let me know the choice that made you determine these reasons - understand: in confidence - so that I many make it my own. What? You are startled? (Are) measuring me with your gaze (1.: eye)? Could be that I am the first Sultan who has that kind of a whim which, however, does not seem altogether unworthy of a Sultan. Is that not true? So speak! Speak. Or do you want a moment (in which) you might consult with your yourself? Good, I shall give it to you. [Aside.] (I wonder) where she is eavesdropping? I want to hear from her; want to hear where I did it right. [Aloud.] Think it over! Quickly, think it over! I won't delay (my) return. [He exits into the antechamber where Sittah has gone.[

Scene 6

NATHAN. [Alone] Hm! Hm! Strange! How am I feeling? What does the Sultan want? What? I am prepared for (a demand for) money, and he wants - truth. Truth! And wants it - like that - so bare, so blank - as though truth were coin! indeed as though it were ancient coin that was being weighed!

That could still pass! However, such modern coin that is only made by stamp, that one only needs to count unto the counting board - that is not what truth is by any means. Like money into the bag, one also should be able to sweep truth into the head? Who is here really the Jew? He or I ? But what? Should he perchance, in truth, not be demanding truth? However, however, the suspicion would be indeed too petty that he might be using the truth merely for a trap! Too petty? Certainly, certainly, he was so impetuous (1.: fell so with the door into the house. - German idiom)! But one knocks first, listens first when one is approaching as a friend. I must proceed cautiously! And how? How that? To want to be such an entirely simon-pure Jew - that doesn't go at all. And not at all Jew, goes still less. Because if not Jew, then he would only have to ask why not Mussulman? That was it. That can save me! Not children alone does one satisfy (1.: feed off) with stories. He is coming. Let him only come!

Scene 7

[Saladin. - Nathan.]

SALADIN. [Aside.] So the coast (1.: field) is clear here! [Aloud.] I am not returning too quickly for you, (am I)! ? You have finished with your reflecting. Well, speak then! No soul can hear us.

NATHAN. Might that the whole world could hear us yet.

SALADIN. That sure is Nathan of his cause? Ha! That I call a wise one! Never to conceal the truth! To risk everything for it! Life and limb (1.: body and life)! Chattels and blood!

NATHAN. Yes! Yes. When it is necessary and when it is profitable.

SALADIN. From now on I may hope to bear one of my titles, "Improver of the World and of the Law" with justification.

NATHAN. Indeed a beautiful title! But, Sultan, before I confide in you completely, will you permit me to tell you a story?

SALADIN. Why not? I have always been a friend of stories well told.

NATHAN. Well, - telling stories well is not exactly my strong point (1.: my affair).

SALADIN. Already again so proudly modest? Hurry! Tell! Tell!

NATHAN. In ancient (1.: gray) years, there lived a man in the East who possessed a ring of immeasurable value (that had) come to him from a beloved hand. The stone was an opal that shone (1.: played) in a hundred lovely colors, and had the magic power of making beloved before God and men him who wore it in that expectation. What wonder that the man from the East, therefore, never left it off his finger and arranged to keep it in (1.: for) his family (1.: house) forever. This was the way he did it (1.: namely: thus). He left the ring to the most beloved of his sons and decreed that that one in turn should bequeath the ring to that one of his sons who to him was the most beloved, and that always the most beloved (son) without regard to birth, solely by virtue of the ring, should become the head, the prince of the family (1.: house). Do you understand me, Sultan?

SALADIN. I understand you. Go on!

NATHAN. In that way,now, this ring went from son to son, finally unto a father of three sons who all three were equally obedient to him, all three of whom he, therefore, could not restrain himself from loving equally well. However, from time to time, now this one, now that one, then the third one, seemed to him worthier of the ring - whenever each one of them found himself alone with him and the other two did not share his outpouring heart - which then he also had the pious weakness to promise each. That went on like that as long as it could. However, (there) came the (time for him) to die, and the good father finds himself embarrassed. It hurts him to vex two of his sons who have relied on his word. What could he do (1.: what to do) ? He sends secretly for an artisan from whom he - after the model of his ring - orders two others, and enjoins him to spare neither cost nor pains so that they should be made identical, perfectly identical with that (first) one.

(In) that the artisan succeeds. When he brings the rings, even the father cannot distinguish his original model. Happy and joyous he calls his sons, each one separately, gives each one his blessing separately - and his ring - and dies. Are you still listening, Sultan?

SALADIN. [Who perplexedly has turned away from him.] I am listening, I am listening. Only come to an end quickly with your story. Will you (hurry)?

NATHAN. I am at the end. Because what still follows, is, of course, self-understood. The father had barely been dead when each one comes with his ring and each one awants to be the prince of the family (1.: house). They investigate, they quarrel, they go to court (1.: complain). In vain; the genuine ring could not be proven; [After a pause in which he expects the Sultan's answer.] almost as unprovable as for us now - the true faith.

SALADIN. What? That is supposed to be the answer to my question?

NATHAN. Is only supposed to excuse me if I do not dare to distinguish the rings which the father had fashioned with the intention that they should not be distinguishable.

SALADIN. The rings! Don't play with me! I should think that the religions that I named to you should well be distinguishable. Down to clothing, down to food and drink!

NATHAN. Only not on the basis of their foundations. For are not all founded on history? Written or handed down! And history, after all, must be accepted on good faith alone (1.: faith and belief)? (Is that) not (so) ? Surely, one's own? Surely that of those to whom we are related? Surely of those who from our childhood on have given us proof of their love? Who have never deceived us, when it was more salutory except for us to be deceived? How can I believe my fathers less than you (believe) yours? Or, the other way around. Can I ask you to make liars out of your ancestors in order not to contradict mine? Or, vice versa (1.: the other way around). The same applies to the Christians. (Is that) not (so)?

SALADIN. [Aside.] By the living God (1.: one)! This man

is right. I must remain speechless.

NATHAN. Let us come back to our rings. As (I have) said: the sons sued each other, and each one swore to the judge that he had received the ring directly out of his father's hand. How true, too! After he had already had the promise from him for a long time to enjoy someday the privileges of the ring! How very (1.: no less) true! The father - averred each one - could not have been false towards him! And before he would permit that to be suspected of such a dear father, rather would be accuse his brothers, - as much as otherwise he was prepared to believe of them only the best - of (playing) a false game - and he would surely know how to find out the traitor, surely avenge himself.

SALADIN. And now, the judge? I am anxious to hear what you are going to have the judge say. Speak!

NATHAN. The judge said: If you don't soon bring me the father hither, then I shall dismiss you from my bench (1.: chair). Do you think that I am here to solve riddles ? Or are you waiting for the genuine ring to open its mouth? But stop! Did I not hear that the genuine ring has the magic power of making beloved before God and men, (of making) pleasing. That must decide! Because surely the false rings will not have that power! Well, whom do two of you love most? Hurry, speak up! You are remaining silent? The rings are working only inwardly? And not outwardly? Each one loves only himself most? Oh, then all three of you are deluded deluders (1.: deceived deceivers)! All your three rings are counterfeit. The real ring presumably has been lost. To hide the loss the father had the three fashioned in the place of (1.: for) (the) one.

SALADIN. Magnificent! Magnificent!

NATHAN. And therefore, continued the judge, if you do not want my counsel instead of my verdict, then go! My counsel, however, is this: you take the matter entirely as it lies. If each of you has his ring from his father, then may each one surely believe his ring to be the real one. It is possible that the father now would no longer tolerate in his family (1.: house) the tyranny of the one ring. And (it is) certain that he loved

all three of you and love you equally by not wishing to oppress two in order to favor one. Well then! Let each one follow zealously his uncorrupted, unprejudiced love! Let each one of you vie in competition to bring to the daylight the power of the stone in his ring! Assist that power by gentleness, by heartfelt peacability, by charity, by fervent devotion to God! And if then the powers of the stones manifest themselves in your children's children's children, then a thousand years hence I shall call them again to his bench (1.: before this chair). Then a wiser man than I will be sitting in this chair and will pronounce judgement. Go! - Thus spoke the modest judge.

SALADIN. God! God!

NATHAN. Saladin, if you feel that you are that wiser, (that) promised man....

SALADIN. [Who hastens towards him and seizes his hand which he does not let go until the end of this scene.] I, dust? I, nothing? Oh, God!

NATHAN. What is moving you, (1.: what is with you), Sultan?

SALADIN. Nathan, dear Nathan! The thousand thousand years of your judge are not yet over. His judge's chair is not for me. Go! Go! But be my friend.

NATHAN. And further Saladin would have to say nothing to me?

SALADIN. Nothing.

NATHAN. Nothing?

SALADIN. Absolutely nothing. And why?

NATHAN. I should still have liked the opportunity to utter a request.

SALADIN. Does it need an opportunity for a request? Speak!

NATHAN. I come from a long (1.: far) journey on which I have been collecting debts. I have almost too much cash. The times are beginning to become precarious again, and I do not know quite well where to place it safely. So I thought

whether you could not perhaps - because an imminent war always needs more money - use something.

SALADIN. [Looking deeply into his eyes.] Nathan! I don't want to ask whether Al-Hafi has already been to see you, don't want to investigate whether not some other suspicion is urging you, to make me this offer voluntarily....

NATHAN. A suspicion?

SALADIN. I deserve it. Forgive me! Because, what is the use? I simply must confess to you that I was about -

NATHAN. Not to seek the same from me?

SALADIN. Indeed.

NATHAN. So both of us would seem to be helped! But that I cannot send you all my cash is due to the young Templar. You surely know him. First I still have to pay him a big item (of account).

SALADIN. (A) Templar? Surely you do not want to support my worst enemies too with your money?

NATHAN. I only speak of the one whose life you spared....

SALADIN. Ah! Of what you are reminding me! Have I not, indeed, completely forgotten that young man! Do you know him? Where is he?

NATHAN. What? So you don't know how much of your mercy for him has flown unto me through him? He, he has saved, in peril of his newly received life, my daughter from the fire.

SALADIN. He? Has he done that? Ha! That is what he looked like. That, indeed, my brother would also have done whom he resembles so much! Is he indeed still here? Then bring him hither! I have been telling my sister so much about this brother whom she has not known that, after all, I must also let her see his image! Go, fetch him! How, then, so many other good deeds can flow out of one good deed - though it was born of mere impulse! Go, fetch him!

NATHAN. [letting go of Saladin's hand.] Instantly! And the other (matter) surely stands (1.: remains) too! [Exits.]

SALADIN. Ah! That I did not let my sister listen! (I must go) see her (1.: to her, to her)! (I must go) see her! But how now shall I tell her about all this? [Exits through the other side.]

Scene 8

[Scene: Underneath the Palms, Near the Cloister, Where the Templar is Waiting For Nathan.] [Templar]

TEMPLAR. [Walks up and down, struggling with himself until he bursts out.] Here is where the sacrificial animal is standing still. Well, then! I do not want, do not want to know more precisely what is going on inside of me; do not want to guess beforehand what will happen. Enough, I have fled in vain, in vain. Now come what is intended to come! The stroke has fallen too quickly to evade it, (the stroke) to which I refused to submit for so long and so stubbornly (1.: so much). To see her whom I had so little desire to see, to see her, and (then) the resolve never again to leave her out of (the sight of) my eyes. What resolve? Resolve is deliberate consideration, action; and I, I suffered, I merely suffered. To see her - and the feeling of being tied to her, of being entwined with her as one - abide as one. To live separated from her is wholly unthinkable to me, would be my death - and wherever we may still be after death, - there, too, my death. Is that now love? Thus loves the Templar, of course - the Christian loves the Jew girl, of course. Hm! What does it matter? I have already shed more prejudices in this promised land - and, therefore, to me - it is promised forever and ever. What, after all, does my Order want? I, (the) Templar, am dead, was dead to it from the moment on that made me Saladin's prisoner. The head that Saladin gave me as a present would still be my old one? (It) is a new one that knows of all (the things) nothing that had been talked into that (old) one - that had been binding that old one. And (it) is a better one, more fashioned for the paternal skies. That I feel indeed. Because only with it (f.: this new head) am I beginning to think as my father must have thought here, unless they have been telling me fairy tales about him. Fairy tales? But quite credible ones, that never seemed more credible to me than now when

I am merely running the risk of stumbling, whereas he fell! He fell! I would rather fall with men than stand up with children. His example assures me of his approval. And for whose else approval do I care? For Nathan's? Oh, I could hardly lack his encouragement, less than his approval. What a Jew! And who wants to seem so wholly only Jewish! There he comes, he is coming in haste, (betraying) radiantly happy pleasure. Who ever came from the Sultan differently? Hey! Hey, Nathan!

Scene 9

[Nathan. - The Templar.]

NATHAN. What? Is it you?

TEMPLAR. You have been staying with the Sultan for a long time.

NATHAN. Well, really not so long. I was delayed considerably in going there. Ah, truly, Curd, that man is equal to his reputation (1.: shadow). But above all let me tell you quickly....

TEMPLAR. What?

NATHAN. He wants to speak with you, wants you to come to him without delay. But accompany me to my house where I first have to arrange (1.: dispose of) something for him; and then we go.

TEMPLAR. Nathan, your house I will not enter again before....

NATHAN. Then in the meantime you have already been there? You have talked to her in the meantime? Well? Say, how do you like Recha?

TEMPLAR. Beyond all expression! However, - see her again - that I will never! Never! Never! Unless you could promise me on the spot that I should see her again for always - always.

NATHAN. How do you want me to understand that?

TEMPLAR. [After a brief pause suddenly throwing himself upon Nathan's neck.] My father!

NATHAN. Young man!

TEMPLAR. [Equally suddenly leaving Nathan again.] Not son? I beg you, Nathan!

NATHAN. Dear young man.

TEMPLAR. Not son? I beg you, Nathan! I conjure you by nature's holiest (1.: first) bonds! Don't impose fetters on them subsequently. Pray be content to be a man! Don't push me away from you!

NATHAN. Dear, dear friend!....

TEMPLAR. And son? Not son? Even then not, then not even if gratitude already should have made (1.: made passable) a path for love to your daughter's heart ? Not even then, too, when both only should be waiting for your nod (1.: beckoning) to melt into one? You are remaining silent?

NATHAN. You surprise me, young knight.

TEMPLAR. I surprise you? Surprise you, Nathan, with your own thoughts? Surely you do not fail to recognize them in my mouth? I surprise you?

NATHAN. Until the time when I (shall) know what particular Stauffen your father was!

TEMPLAR. What are you saying, Nathan? What? At this moment you feel nothing but curiosity?

NATHAN. Because, see! I myself have formerly known a Stauffen well who was called Konrad.

TEMPLAR. Well, suppose my father would have had the same name?

NATHAN. Really?

TEMPLAR. I myself too am called after my father. Curd is (the same as) Konrad.

NATHAN. Well, then, my Konrad was after all not your father. Because my Konrad was what you are, was a Templar, was never married.

TEMPLAR. Oh, on that account!

NATHAN. How?

TEMPLAR. Oh, on that account he could still well have been my father.

NATHAN. You are jesting.

TEMPLAR. And you are surely taking it too seriously (1.: accurately). What could it be, then? Something like a bastard or an illegitimate son. (Transl. note: The German word "bastard" denotes a bastard of noble origin only; it is followed here by another German word "Bankert" denoting a bastard of non-noble origin.) That type of man is not to be despised, either. But relieve me forever of having to prove my ancestry. I, in turn, will relieve you (of proving to me) yours. Not as though I had the least doubt of your pedigree (1.: ancestor's tree). God beware! You could, leaf for leaf, prove it back (1.: up) to Abraham. And from there on further, I know it myself, will swear to it myself.

NATHAN. You are becoming bitter. But do I deserve it? Have I indeed already refused you anything? I merely do not want at this moment to hold you to your word. Nothing more.

TEMPLAR. Really? Nothing more? Oh, then forgive!....

NATHAN. But come now, come!

TEMPLAR. Where to? No! With you to your house? Not that! Not that! That's where the fire is! I want to wait for you here. Go! If I am to see her again, then I shall see her still often enough. If not, then I have already seen too much of her....

NATHAN. I want to hasten as much as possible. [Exits.]

Scene 10

[The Templar and soon afterwards, Daja.]

TEMPLAR. Already more than enough! Man's brain can absorb so immeasurably much, and yet sometimes, too, is filled so suddenly! Filled by a (mere) trifle, so suddenly! Good for nothing, good for nothing, even if it be full of whatever

it may. But only patience! The soul kneads the puffed-up matter soon into its mass, produces space for itself, and light and order return once more. I love for the first time? Or was what I knew as love not love? Is love only what I am feeling now?

DAJA. [Who has been approaching stealthily from the side.] Sir! Sir!

TEMPLAR. Who is calling? Ha, Daja, you?

DAJA. I have crept past him. But he could still see us where you are standing here. Therefore, pray come closer to me, behind this tree.

TEMPLAR. What is going on then? So secretive? What is it?

DAJA. Indeed, it does concern a secret - that which brings me to you, and actually, a twofold one. One I only know; the other you only know. How would it be if we exchanged (them)? Entrust me yours, then will trust you with mine.

TEMPLAR. With pleasure. If I only first knew what you fancy to be mine. But that will probably become clear from yours. Pray go ahead, again.

DAJA. Ah, but think! No, Sir Knight, you first; I (shall) follow. Because be assured, my secret can avail you absolutely nothing if I don't have yours beforehand. Only hurry! Because once I have gotten it out of you by questioning, you have confided nothing to me. My secret then will remain my secret, and you are rid of yours. But, poor knight! That you men could even merely believe (to be able) to conceal such a secret from us women!

TEMPLAR. Of which frequently we don't know ourselves that we possess it.

DAJA. It could well be. Therefore I must, indeed, first have (your) friendship in order to acquaint you with it. Tell: What did it mean that you decamped (1.: got yourself out of the dust) so suddenly! That you for left us sitting in that way? That now you are not returning with Nathan? Has Recha affected you so little, indeed? What? Or perhaps so much?

So much! How, indeed, you are teaching me to know the poor bird that is stuck to the rod, fluttering! In brief, confess it only quickly to me that you love her, love her to madness and I shall tell you something....

TEMPLAR. To madness? Truly, you understand it excellently.

DAJA. Well, just admit to me your (1.: the) love; the madness I will forgive you.

TEMPLAR. Because it is self-understood? A Templar love a Jew girl!....

DAJA. Of course it seems to make (1.: have) little sense. But at times there is more sense, too, in a thing than we surmise; and it would, after all, not be so unheard of that our Saviour would draw (men) unto himself by paths that the prudent one would not so easily tread by himself.

TEMPLAR. That so solemnly? [Aside.] And (if) I put prudence in the place of Saviour: is she then not right? [Aloud] You are making me more curious than ordinarily surely I am accustomed to being.

DAJA. Oh! This is the land of miracles!

TEMPLAR. [Aside.] Well! Of the miraculous. Could it really be otherwise? The whole world indeed is crowding together here. [Aloud] Dear Daja, accept as (though I had) confessed what you demanded, that I love her, that I don't understand how I will live without her, that....

DAJA. Really? Really? Swear then to me, Sir, to make her yours, to save her - temporally here, forever there to save her.

TEMPLAR. And how? How can I? Can I swear what does not stand in my power?

DAJA. It does stand in your power. By a single word, I place it in your power.

TEMPLAR. (So) that even the father would not have anything against it?

DAJA. Ah, what father! Father! The father will have to acquiesce, anyway.

TEMPLAR. Will have to? He still has not fallen among highwaymen. He will not have to acquiesce.

DAJA. Well, so he must want, must gladly, finally, want to.

TEMPLAR. Must and gladly! But, Daja, if I tell you now that I myself have already attempted to touch that string?

DAJA. What? And he did not agree with you (1.: join you)?

TEMPLAR. He agreed (1.: joined) with a discordant note which - insulted me.

DAJA. What are you saying? How? You should have let him see even the mere shadow of a wish for Recha and he would not have jumped up for joy? Should have retreated frostily? Should have made difficulties?

TEMPLAR. Approximately that.

DAJA. So then I will no longer hesitate (1.: think over) for another moment. [A pause.]

TEMPLAR. And still you are hesitating (1.: thinking over)?

DAJA. That man is so good in all other things! I myself owe him so much! Oh, that he doesn't want to listen at all! God knows my heart bleeds to force him like that.

TEMPLAR. I beg of you, Daja, put me out of this uncertainty once and for all. But you yourself are still so uncertain whether what you intend is to be called good or evil, shameful or praiseworthy. Be still. I want to forget that you have something to keep secret.

DAJA. That is spurring on, instead of retarding. So know then: Recha is not a Jewess, is - is a Christian!

TEMPLAR. [Coldly.] (Is that) so? I wish you luck (f.: congratulate you)! Has it been difficult? Don't let yourself be scared in (your) birth pangs! Be sure to continue zealously to populate heaven if you can no longer do it on earth!

DAJA. What, Sir? Does my news deserve this scorn? That Recha is a Christian, that doesn't make you happier, - you a Christian, a Templar, who loves her?

TEMPLAR. Especially because she is a Christian of your making.

DAJA. Oh! That is how you understand it? Let it pass then! No! That person I want to see who could convert that girl! It is her good fortune that she has been for a long time what she has been spoiled to become.

TEMPLAR. Explain yourself, or - go!

DAJA. She is a Christian child, born of Christian parents, was baptized....

TEMPLAR. [Quickly.] And Nathan?

DAJA. Not her father!

TEMPLAR. Nathan, not her father? Do you know what you are saying?

DAJA. The truth which so often has made me weep bloody tears. No, he is not her father.

TEMPLAR. And should merely have brought her up as his daughter? Should have educated the Christian child as a Jewess for himself?

DAJA. Absolutely so.

TEMPLAR. She might not know what she was born? She should never have learned from him that she was born a Christian, and not a Jewess?

DAJA. Never!

TEMPLAR. He should not only have brought up the child in that delusion? Also (have) left the girl in that delusion?

DAJA. Unfortunately!

TEMPLAR. Nathan. How? The wise, good Nathan should have permitted himself to falsify thus the voice of nature. To mislead thus the outpouring of a heart which, if left to itself, would have taken entirely different ways? Daja, you have indeed confided something to me, something of importance, that can have consequences, that embarrasses me, about which I don't know immediately what I must do. Therefore, give me time. Therefore, go! He will pass by here again. He might

surprise us. Go!

DAJA. I would die (1.: would be death's)!

TEMPLAR. I am now altogether unable to speak. If you should meet him, just tell him that we shall meet again at the Sultan's.

DAJA. But be sure not to have him notice that you have anything against him. That was merely intended to give the final push to the matter, was only intended to lift all scruples from you, for Recha's sake. But if you then conduct her to Europe, you will then not leave me behind?

TEMPLAR. That will show (1.: find itself) in time. Go only, go!

Act Four

Scene 1

[Scene: Under the Crossways Inside the Cloisters.] [The Friar, and soon thereafter, the Templar.]

FRIAR. Yes, yes! He is quite right, the Patriarch! Of course I have not managed to be successful in too much of all that he has charged me with. But why, then, does he charge me with all such things? I do not like being subtle, don't like to persuade, don't like to stick my little nose into everything, don't like to have my little hands in everything. Have I renounced the world (1.: departed from this world), I as far as I am concerned (1.: I for myself) in order to get myself embroiled twofold - for others?

TEMPLAR. [Approaching him in haste.] Good brother. So here you are. I have already sought for you for a long time.

FRIAR. Me, Sire?

TEMPLAR. You no longer know me.

FRIAR. By no means (1.: to be sure), by no means! I merely believed that I would never again in my life get to see your Lordship again. Because that I had hoped by dear God. Dear God who knows how bitter the request was to me that I had been forced to make of your Lordship. He knows whether I wished to find an open ear with you, knows how much I rejoiced, rejoiced in my innermost (being) that you so roundly rejected all without hesitating, that does not become a knight. But now you are coming, nevertheless; now it has finally had an effect, after all!

TEMPLAR. You know already why I am coming? I hardly know it myself.

FRIAR. You have thought it over now. Have found now that, after all, the Patriarch is not so wrong; that honor and money are to be won by his proposal; that an enemy is an enemy,

though he might have been our (guardian) angel seven times. That you have now considered realistically (1.: with flesh and blood) and (you) are coming to offer yourself. Oh God!

TEMPLAR. My goodly, dear man! Rest assured (1.: give yourself satisfied). I am not coming because of that, because of that I don't want to speak to the Patriarch. Still, still do I think about those points as I have thought previously, and (I) wouldn't for anything in the world (want to) lose the good opinion of which so straight-forward, so godly, so good a man once found me worthy. I merely come to ask the Patriarch's counsel concerning a matter....

FRIAR. You - the Patriarch? A knight (ask) a - preacher? [Looking around timidly.]

TEMPLAR. Yes; the matter is rather preachy.

FRIAR. Nevertheless, the preacher never asks the knight, no matter how knightly the matter might be.

TEMPLAR. Because he has the privilege of going wrong, which the likes of us don't envy him very much. Of course, if I had to act only for myself, of course, if I had to account only to myself, what need would I have of your Patriarch? But I would rather do certain things badly after the will of others than well after my own. Furthermore, I realize now well that religion is partisan, too, and no matter how nonpartisan one might believe oneself, one will still be, without knowing it, sticking only by his own (1.: holding the stick by one's own. German colloquialism). Because that is so, it is presumed to be right.

FRIAR. About that I prefer to remain silent. Because I do not quite understand your Lordship.

TEMPLAR. And still - ! [Aside.] Let's see, what was I really concerned with? Authoritative fiat or counsel? Simple or learned counsel? [Aloud.] I thank you, brother, thank you for the good (f.: friendly) hint! What (is the use of the) Patriarch? You be my Patriarch! To be sure, I really want more to ask the Christian in the Patriarch than the Patriarch in the Christian. The matter is this....

FRIAR. Go no further, Sire, no further! What for? Your

Lordship is misjudging me. (He) who knows much has much to worry about, and I after all have devoted (1.: vowed) myself to one care only. Oh, good! Listen! Here, to my good fortune, he himself is coming. Just remain standing here. He has already seen you.

Scene 2

[The Patriarch who comes walking down one of the crossways in full, resplendent ecclesiastic regalia. - The Templar. - The Friar.]

TEMPLAR. I would rather avoid him. He would not be my man! A fat, red-faced, friendly prelate! And what pomp!

FRIAR. You should only see him when he goes to court. Now he comes only from a sick (visit).

TEMPLAR. How Saladin must indeed feel ashamed (f.: blush)!

PATRIARCH. [In coming closer he beckons to the Friar.] Hither! That is probably the Templar. What does he want?

FRIAR. (I) don't know.

PATRIARCH. [Advancing toward the Templar while the Friar and the Patriarch's retinue are stepping into the background.] Well, sir knight! (I am) very happy to see the worthy young man! Well, still so very young! Well, with God's help something can still become of that.

TEMPLAR. Hardly more than it is already. And probably something less.

PATRIARCH. I wish, at least, that such a pious knight may flourish like a green bay tree for a long while yet to the honor and glory of dear Christendom, of God's cause! This cannot fail, then, too, if only the young valor will follow nicely the mature counsel of age! With what, pray, can your Lordship be served?

TEMPLAR. With the very thing which my youth lacks: with counsel.

PATRIARCH. With pleasure! Only must the counsel also be accepted.

TEMPLAR. But surely not blindly?

PATRIARCH. But who is saying that? Oh, of course, no one must overlook to make use of the reason which God has given him, (that is) in the place where it belongs. But does it really belong everywhere? Oh no! For instance: if God, through one of his angels - so to say - through a servant of his word - deems us worthy of being acquainted with a means of furthering, to strengthening in some very special manner the welfare of Christendom, the weal of the Church, who may then still make bold to probe for reason the free will of Him who has created reason? And to question the eternal law of the glory of heaven according to the small rules of vain honor? But enough of that. What is it, then, concerning which your Lordship requires our counsel at this moment?

TEMPLAR. Suppose, reverend Father, a Jew had an only child - let it be a girl - whom he had brought up with the greatest care to finest flowering (l.: everything good), that he loved her more than his soul, that (she) in turn loved him with the most devoted love. And now the likes of me had learned (that) this girl was not the Jew's daughter; (that) he had picked her up in infancy, bought, stolen (her) - anything you want; (that) it was known that the girl was a Christian child, and had been baptized; that the Jew had merely brought her up as a Jewess, and was merely letting her remain a Jewess, and, thus, as his daughter: tell (me), reverend Father, what in that case might well have to be done.

PATRIARCH. I shudder! But first of all, your Lordship might explain whether such a case might be a fact or a hypothesis. That is to say, whether your Lordship has merely invented it that way, or whether it has actually happened and continues to go on.

TEMPLAR. I thought that was one and the same, (I wanted to) simply listen to Your Reverence's opinion.

PATRIARCH. One and the same? Now in this instance your Lordship can see how proud manly reason can err in (things) spiritual. Not at all! Because if the case (which you

have) submitted is only one of those games of whim, then it isn't worth the trouble to think it through in earnest. By that I mean to have referred your Lordship to the theater where that kind of pro and con could be treated with much applause. But if your Lordship doesn't merely make game of me with a theatrical farce, if the case is (based on) fact, if it even had occurred in our diocese, our beloved city of Jerusalem - yes, in that case -

TEMPLAR. And what in that case?

PATRIARCH. Then immediately the Jew would have to be forfeit to the punishment which papal and imperial law prescribe for such a wicked deed, for such a deed of vice.

TEMPLAR. So?

PATRIARCH. And indeed the above mentioned laws prescribe for the Jew who entices a Christian to apostasy - the pyre, the stake -

TEMPLAR. So?

PATRIARCH. And much more, for the Jew who tears away by force a poor Christian child from the covenant of its baptism! Because isn't everything one does to children (done by) force? That is to say, except what the Church does to children.

TEMPLAR. But what if the child perhaps would have perished in misery, had not the Jew had mercy on it?

PATRIARCH. No matter! The Jew is to be burned. Because better that it had perished here in misery than it should have been saved in such a manner to its eternal perdition. Furthermore, what right has the Jew to anticipate God? God can well do His saving without him, if he wants to save.

TEMPLAR. Despite him, too, I should think, provide salvation.

PATRIARCH. No matter! The Jew is to be burned.

TEMPLAR. That shocks me (1.: goes close to me)! Especially because they are saying that he had brought up the girl not so much in his (own) faith, but rather in no (particular)

faith, and had taught her about God no more, no less, than what satisfies reason.

PATRIARCH. No matter! The Jew is to be burned! - Yes, merely for that reason alone (would he be) worthy of being burned thrice! What? To let a child grow up without any faith at all? What? Not at all to teach a child the great duty of believing? That is too colossal! I am (very) much surprised, Sir Knight, that you yourself....

TEMPLAR. Reverend Sir, the rest, God willing, in the confessional. [Wants to leave.]

PATRIARCH. What? (You do) not even to answer me (1.: stand me an answer) ? Not to name me the evildoer, the Jew? Not to bring him to me here? Oh, for that I know counsel! I (shall) go to the Sultan forthwith. Saladin, by virtue of the treaty to which he has sworn, must protect for us, must protect for us, protect by all laws, by all covenants, those whomever we may count (as members) of (1.: count to) our holiest religion! God be praised! We have the original copy, we have his signature, his seal. We! Then, also, I shall make it easily understandable for him how dangerous it is for the state (if people) don't believe in anything! All civic ties are dissolved, are torn, if man is permitted to believe nothing. Away, away with such wickedness....

TEMPLAR. A pity that I cannot enjoy this splendid sermon in more (1.: better) leisure! I have been called to the Sultan.

PATRIARCH. Really? - Well, in that case - Well, if that is so - Then -

TEMPLAR. I want to prepare the Sultan if it pleases your Reverence doesn't.

PATRIARCH. Oh, oh! I know that your Lordship has found grace with Saladin! I beg to remember me to him most cordially (1.: only to the best). I am driven solely by me (1.: the) zeal for God. What I do too much, I am doing for him. That is something your Lordship might, please, consider! And, please, Sir Knight, that previously mentioned (matter) about the Jew was (of course) merely a hypothesis - That is to say -

TEMPLAR. A hypothesis [Exits.]

PATRIARCH. [Aside.] Which nevertheless I must trace more closely to its source. That would again be the right kind of a mission for Brother Bonafides. [Aloud.] Come over here, my son! [Exiting, he talks to the Friar.]

Scene 3

[Scene: A Room in the Sultan's Palace Into Which Slaves Are Carrying Scores of Leather Pouches Which They are Placing Side by Side On the Floor.] [Saladin, and soon thereafter, Sittah.]

SALADIN. [Approaching.] Well really! That seems to be unending (1.: still has no end). Is there still much of that trash left?

A SLAVE. Perhaps still half.

SALADIN. Then carry the rest to Sittah. And where is Al-Hafi keeping himself (1.: remaining). Al-Hafi is to take these things here into his safe-keeping (1.: unto himself) immediately. Or might it perhaps not be better if I sent it to father? Here it will only be slipping through my fingers, anyway. However, one probably becomes hardened at last, and now it will surely take artifice to squeeze much out of me. At least until the money from Egypt will come to hand, the poor may see how they get along! The alms at the (Saviour's grave - if only they continue! If only the Christian pilgrims may not depart empty-handed. If only -

SITTAH. What, now, is the meaning of that? What is the money supposed to be doing with me (f.: Why give me the money)?

SALADIN. Make yourself paid with it, and place in reserve if anything is (1.: remains) left over.

SITTAH. Has Nathan not arrived yet with the Templar?

SALADIN. He is looking for him everywhere.

SITTAH. Look, pray, what I have found here while my old

trinkets were running through my hands. [Showing him a miniature painting.]

SALADIN. Ha! My brother! That is he, is he! Was he! Was he! Oh! gallant, dear boy, that I had to lose you so early! What all could I have undertaken with you, at your side! Sittah, leave me the picture. I already know it, too; he gave it to his older sister, his Leila, who one morning did not want to let out of her arms at all. It was the last morning (1.: one) that he rode out. Ah, I let him ride - and alone! Ah, Leila died from grief and never forgave me that I let him ride so unaccompanied. He passed away.

SITTAH. The poor brother!

SALADIN. Leave only be (f.: Do not let it grieve you)! Some day, after all, all of us (must) pass away! Furthermore, who knows? It is not only death alone that shifts the goal for a young man of his kind. He has more enemies, and often even the strongest succumb just like the weakest. Well, be that as it may! I must surely compare the picture with the young Templar, must indeed see how much my imagination may have deceived me.

SITTAH. That is the very reason whay I am bringing it (to you). But give (it back to me), give (it back to me!) I can tell you for sure that a woman's eye understands this best.

SALADIN. [To a doorkeeper who is entering.] Who is here? The Templar? Let him enter!

SITTAH. Lest I disturb you - lest I upset him by my curiosity - [She seats herself on a sofa on the far side (of the room) and drops her veil.]

SALADIN. Good so! Good! [Aside.] And now (I shall hear) his voice! What may it be like? Assad's voide, too, is probably still sleepiing in my soul (f.: my subconscious will remember the sound of Assad's voice)!

Scene 4

[The Templar. - Saladin.]

TEMPLAR. I, your prisoner, Saladin....

SALADIN. My prisoner? To whom I grant life - would I not also give his liberty?

TEMPLAR. What it behooves you to do, (it) behooves me first to hear, not to anticipate. But, Sultan - thanks, especial thanks for (the sparing of) my life is not in keeping with my calling and (my) character. My life (1.: it), under any circumstances, is (1.: stands) again at your disposal.

SALADIN. Just don't make use of it against me! To be sure, one pair of additional hands I don't begrudge my enemies. However, to also not begrudge them such a heart, becomes difficult for me. I have not deceived myself in you in any way, gallant young man! As you live and breathe (1.: with soul and body) you are my Assad. See! I could ask you where, indeed, you have been hiding yourself all this time? In which cave you have been sleeping? In what desert of the Genii, by what good Div (f.: fairy) this bloom has been kept so fresh in spite of everything (1.: yet and yet)? Look! I could want to remind you of the things that we undertook together there and there. I could quarrel with you that you still kept one secret from me! Still were able to conceal from me one adventure: Yes, that I could if I were seeing only you and not also myself. Well, my it be! Of this sweet dreaming there is yet still so much true that in the autumn of my life (1.: my autumn) an Assad could blossom again. (I hope that) you are satisfied with it, Knight?

TEMPLAR. Everything that might emanate from you - be it what it may - has been lying in my soul as a wish.

SALADIN. Let us try that out at once. Would you like to stay with me? Around me? As Christian, as Mussulman - it doesn't matter (All the same)! In the white mantle (of the Templar) or (in) the broad cloak of the Arab (1.: in the Jamerlonk); in the turban or your felt (hat). As you like! It doesn't matter! I have never demanded that all trees should grow the same bark.

TEMPLAR. If that were not the case (1.: otherwise), too, you would hardly be who you are: the hero who would prefer to be God's gardener.

SALADIN. Well, then, if you do not think worse of me, then we would already have agreed (1.: be to rights) half-way?

TEMPLAR. All the way (1.: entirely).

SALADIN. [Offering him his hand.] A word (f.: you give me your word of honor)?

TEMPLAR. [Putting his hand in Saladin's.] A man (f.: As a man of honor, I do)! (Transl. note: The above free translation is appropriate rendition of the German idiom "A word - a man"). Receive with that more than you were able to take from me. (I am) wholly yours!

SALADIN. Too much gain for one day! Too much! Didn't he come along?

TEMPLAR. Who?

SALADIN. Nathan.

TEMPLAR. [Icily.] No. I came by myself.

SALADIN. What a deed you have been performing (1.: what a deed by you)! And what wise good fortune that that kind of a deed turned out for the benefit (1.: best) of such a man.

TEMPLAR. To be sure, to be sure!

SALADIN. So cold? No, young man! When God does something through us, one must not be so cold! Not even because modesty wants to appear so cold!

TEMPLAR. That everything in the world has so many sides! Of which often it cannot be fathomed at all how they fit each other!

SALADIN. Just stick always to the best one only, and praise God! He knows how they fit together. But if you want to be so difficult, young man, then I, too, probably will have to be on my guard with you? Unfortunately, I, too, am a thing of many sides that frequently don't seem to fit so well.

TEMPLAR. That hurts! Because usually suspicion is not one of my defects (1.: so little my failing) -

SALADIN. Well, so say, then, with whom you are on the out (1.: with whom you are having it)? It even seemed (to me), with Nathan. What? Suspicion against Nathan? You? Declare yourself! Speak! Come, give me the first token of your confidence.

TEMPLAR. I have nothing against Nathan. I am angry only at myself -

SALADIN. And about what?

TEMPLAR. That I could have dreamed that a Jew could also unlearn to be a Jew; that I was dreaming while I was awake.

SALADIN. Out with this waking dream!

TEMPLAR. You know of Nathan's daughter, Sultan. What I have done for her, that I did - because I did it. Too proud to harvest thanks where I never sowed it, I disdained day and night to see the girl again. Her (1.: the) father was far away; he comes; he hears; he seeks me out; he thanks (me); he wishes that his daughter might please me, talks of prospects, talks about a happy future. Well, I allowed myself to be wheedled, (I) come, see, find really a girl....Ah, I must be ashamed, Sultan!

SALADIN. Be ashamed? That a Jew girl made an impression on you - surely nevermore (of that)?

TEMPLAR. That my hasty heart opposed so little resistance to that impression that resulted from the lovely prattle of the father! I, dolt! I jumped into the fire a second time. Because this time I did the wooing, and this time I was rejected!

SALADIN. Rejected?

TEMPLAR. The wise father doesn't exactly reject me flatly. But the wise father has to inform himself first, think (it) over first. Indeed! Did I then do the same? (Did I) inform myself, think over first, didn't I, when she was crying out in the fire? Indeed! By God! It is really something lovely

to be so wise, so circumspect!

SALADIN. Well, well! So be a bit indulgent with an old man (1.: overlook something for an old one)! How long, then, can his refusals last? Will (he) then demand of you that you first should become a Jew?

TEMPLAR. Who knows?

SALADIN. Who knows? (He knows) who knows this Nathan better.

TEMPLAR. The superstition in which we have grown up does not lose its power over us even for the reason that we recognize it as such. Not all are free who mock their chains.

SALADIN. A very mature observation! But Nathan, surely Nathan....

TEMPLAR. The worst superstition is to consider one's own superstition the more tolerable one....

SALADIN. May well be (true)! But Nathan....

TEMPLAR. To which alone to entrust weak-minded mankind until it will grow used to the brighter light of truth; to which alone....

SALADIN. Good! But Nathan! That weakness is not Nathan's nature.

TEMPLAR. That is what I,too, thought!.... If all the same that paragon among all men should be such a rotten Jew that he would try to snatch (1.: secure) Christian children, in order to bring them up as Jews: what then?

SALADIN. Who is alleging such a thing about him?

TEMPLAR. The same girl, with whom he is baiting me, with whose hopes he seemed to want to pay me for what he would not want me to have done gratis: this very girl is - not his daughter, is a stray Christian child.

SALADIN. Whom in spite of that he did not want to give to you?

TEMPLAR. [Vehemently.] Wanted or didn't want! He has been found out! The tolerant prattler has been found out! I

shall yet know how bring the hounds who will ruffle him, after that Jewish wolf in the philosophical sheep's clothing (1.: fur).

SALADIN. Keep still, Christian!

TEMPLAR. What? (Keep) still, Christian? If Jew and Mussulman insist on Jew, on Mussulman, shall, then, the Christian alone not be allowed to stand up for (1.: make) a Christian?

SALADIN. [Even sterner.] Be still, Christian!

TEMPLAR. [Calmly.] I feel the full weight of the reproach - which Saladin is compressing into that word (1.: syllable)! Ah, if I knew how Assad - Assad would have conducted himself in this (situation, if he were) in my place!

SALADIN. Not much better! Presumably quite as impetuously! But who has already been teaching you, too, to bribe me just as he (used to do) with a single word? Of course, if everything is as you have been telling me, then I can hardly be well up on Nathan. However, he is my friend, and among my friends none must quarrel with the other. Let yourself be taught! Proceed cautiously! Don't deliver him up immediately to the fanatics of your mob! Keep secret what your clergy would press me (1.: place near me) so strongly to avenge on him! Don't be a Christian (merely) to spite a Jew, (or) a Mussulman!

TEMPLAR. It would almost (1.: soon) have been too late for that! But thanks (be) to the blood thirst of the Patriarch who made me shudder to become his tool!

SALADIN. What? You went to the Patriarch rather than to me?

TEMPLAR. In the turmoil of passion, in the whirlpool of indecision! Forgive (me)! You will probably, I fear, want to recognize nothing further of your Assad in me!

SALADIN. Unless it were this very fear! I think I know from which faults our virtues bud. Just cultivate <u>those</u> further - and the others shall harm you little with me. But go! Seek now Nathan, as he has been seeking you, and bring him hither. Surely I must instruct you <u>together</u>. If you should be

seriously concerned about the girl: rest assured (1.: calm). She is yours! Then, too, Nathan shall learn (1.: feel) whether he can bring up a Christian child without pork! Go! [The Templar exits, and Sittah rises from the sofa.]

Scene 5

[Saladin. - Sittah.]

SITTAH. Quite strange!

SALADIN. Isn't it, Sittah? Must Assad not have been a gallant, handsome young man?

SITTAH. If he was like that and actually the Templar had not been (1.: sat as) the model! But how could you really be able to forget to inquire about his parents?

SALADIN. And especially, surely, about his mother? Whether his mother had ever been in this country? Is that not what you mean (1.: so)?

SITTAH. You are acting (1.: do that) well.

SALADIN. Oh, nothing would be more possible. Because Assad was so welcome with pretty Christian ladies, was so eagerly after pretty Christian ladies, that once upon a time there was even gossip - well, well, one does not like to talk about it. Enough, I have him again! Want to have him again - with all his faults, with all (the) moods of his soft heart! Oh, Nathan must give him the girl. Don't you think?

SITTAH. Give him? Leave (her) to him!

SALADIN. Indeed! What kind of right would Nathan have to her as soon as he no longer is her father? He who thus saved her life is the only one to succeed to the rights of the one who gave it (f.: life) to her.

SITTAH. How then, Saladin? (What about) if you actually took the girl unto yourself right away? (If) only you would take her away forthwith from the unlawful owner?

SALADIN. Would that really be necessary?

SITTAH. Well, not exactly. My fond curiosity alone is driving me to give you that advice. Because I like so very much to know as soon as possible of certain men what kind of a girl they can love.

SALADIN. Well, then send (for her) and have her brought (here).

SITTAH. May I, brother?

SALADIN. Only, spare Nathan! Nathan must be no means believe that one wants to separate him from her by force.

SITTAH. Don't worry.

SALADIN. And I, I must after all go looking myself where Al-Hafi is keeping himself (1.: remains).

Scene 6

[Scene: Open Hall in Nathan's House, Facing the Palms, As In the First Scene of Act One. Part of the Wares and Treasures With Which the Dialogue Deals Lie about Unpacked.]

[Nathan. - Daja.]

DAJA. Oh, everything (is) magnificent! Everything (is) exquisite! Oh, everything (is) -, as only you can give it. Where do they make the silver cloth inwrought with golden vine? What does it cost? That's what I call a bridal gown! No queen could ask for anything better.

NATHAN. Bridal gown? Why indeed bridal gown?

DAJA. Well, after all. Of course you were not thinking of that when you bought it. But truly, Nathan, that and none other must it be! It is as though (it had been) ordered for a bridal gown. The white foundation (is) a symbol of innocence, and the golden currents that are meandering through its foundation all over (are) a symbol of wealth. Do you see? Most lovely!

NATHAN. What (kind of) fun are you poking at me here? Whose bridal gown are you symbolizing to me so learnedly?

DAJA. I?

NATHAN. Well, who else?

DAJA. I? Dear God!

NATHAN. Who then? Of whose bridal gown are you then talking? After all, all this is yours and not for any other.

DAJA. Is mine? Is to be mine? Isn't for Recha?

NATHAN. What I brought for Recha lies in another bale. Hurry! Take (it) away! Be off with your kit and boodle!

DAJA. Tempter! No, if these were the treasures of the entire world! I will touch nothing! Unless you swear to me beforehand to make use of this singular opportunity, the like of which heaven will not send you twice.

NATHAN. (Make) use? Of what? Opportunity? For what?

DAJA. Oh, do not feign being surprised (1.: do not pose so strange)! In brief words: the Templar loves Recha; give her to him! In that way, once and for all, your sin that you can no longer conceal will have an end. In that way, the girl will come among Christians again, will become once more what she is, will be again what she was - and you, you will have not merely been gathering fiery coals upon your head with all the good for which we (never) can thank you enough.

NATHAN. Really, the old harp again? Only strung with a new string. Which, I am afraid, is out of tune and will snap (1.: neither is in tune nor will hold).

DAJA. How so?

NATHAN. The Templar would suit me quite well. Him I would not begrudge Recha, - less than anyone in the world. However.... Well, just have patience.

DAJA. Patience? Patience is perhaps not your old harp?

NATHAN. Only a few days yet, patience! But look! Who is it who is coming here? A friar? Go, ask him what he wants.

DAJA. What will he be wanting? [She approaches the Friar and asks him.]

NATHAN. So give (him something)! And before he asks!

[Aside] If I only knew (how) to get at the Templar without telling him the cause of my curiosity! And if I tell it to him and my (1.: the) suspicion is groundless, then I have risked my position as father (1.: risked the father) quite in vain. [Aloud.] What is it?

DAJA. He wants to speak with you.

NATHAN. Well, then let him come. And in the meantime go away.

Scene 7

[Nathan. - The Friar.]

NATHAN. [Aside] But I should so very much like to remain Recha's father! However, could I, then, not remain her father (1.: it) even if I cease to be called her father (1.: called it)? For her, for her, I shall be called that forever, when she recognizes how much I want to be. [Aloud.] (Transl. note: To Daja who has been hovering nearby) Go! Of what service can I be (1.: what is at your service), pious Brother?

FRIAR. Not much, really. I am happy, Sir Nathan, to see you so well once more.

NATHAN. So you know me?

FRIAR. Well! Who doesn't know you? You have indeed squeezed your name into the hand of so many a man. It has been (1.: stands) in mine, too, for many years.

NATHAN. [Reaching for his purse.] Come, Brother, come; I shall refresh it.

FRIAR. Have thanks! I would be stealing it from poorer ones - (I) am not taking anything. But if you will only permit me to refresh my name a bit with you. Because I, too, can boast of having placed something into your hand, (something) that was not to be despised.

NATHAN. Forgive (me)! I am ashamed. Tell (me) - what (was it) ? And accept from me as amends its sevenfold value.

FRIAR. But listen above all how I myself have been reminded only today of this pledge of mine that I entrusted to you.

NATHAN. (A) pledge entrusted to me?

FRIAR. (Only) a short time ago I was still living (1.: sitting) in (the) Quarantana (desert), not far from Jericho. Then Arab bandit rabble came, wrecked my little church (1.: house of God) and my hermitage (1.: cell) and dragged me off. Luckily I was still able to escape and fled hither to the Patriarch in order to ask (him) for another little spot where I could serve my God in solitude until my blessed end.

NATHAN. I am standing on burning coals, good Brother. Make it brief. The pledge! The pledge entrusted to me!

FRIAR. Immediately, Sir Nathan. Well, the Patriarch promised me a hermitage on (Mount) Tabor as soon as one would be vacant, and ordered me to remain in the meantime at the cloister as a lay brother. That's where I am at present, Sir Nathan, and I long each day perhaps a hundred times for (Mount) Tabor. Because the Patriarch is using me for all sorts of things which greatly disgust me. For example -

NATHAN. Hurry, I beg you (f.: come to the point)!

FRIAR. Well, it's coming (f.: I am coming to that)! Someone here today has put (a flea) into his ear (that) a Jew was living hereabouts who allegedly was bringing up a Christian child for himself.

NATHAN. What? [Startles.]

FRIAR. Just let me finish (1.: listen me out)! While he orders me to find quickly, if possible, the trail of that Jew and became mightily incensed (1.: incensed himself) over such (a) wicked deed which seems to him the true sin against the Holy Ghost - that is the sin that among all sins is deemed by us the greatest sin - only that we, thank God, do not know quite exactly whereof it actually consists - there, all of a sudden, my conscience begins to awaken and I remember (that) ages ago I myself might well have provided the opportunity for this unpardonable sin. Say, did not a horse groom eighteen years ago bring you a small daughter (who was then only) a few weeks old.

NATHAN. How (is) that? - Well, indeed - indeed -

FRIAR. Ah! Then take a good look at me (1.: look at me right well)! The horse groom - that is I.

NATHAN. Is you?

FRIAR. The gentleman from whom I brought her to you was - if I remember right (1.: if it is right to me) - a Baron von Filnek. Wolf von Filnek!

NATHAN. Correct!

FRIAR. Because the mother had died shortly before and the father suddenly had to hurry (1.: throw himself) to - I believe - Ghaza, whither the little worm could not follow him, so he sent it to you. And didn't I meet you at Darun?

NATHAN. Quite right!

FRIAR. It would not be a miracle if my memory deceived me. I have had so many gallant masters and this (particular) one I served (only) all too briefly (1.: little time). Soon (after that) he perished near Ascalon, and, furthermore, had been quite a lovable master.

NATHAN. Yes, indeed! Yes, indeed! To whom I have to thank for so much! Who more than once snatched me from the sword.

FRIAR. Oh, beautiful! Then you would have taken care of his small daughter all the more zealously!

NATHAN. That you can imagine (1.: think)!

FRIAR. Well - where is she then? Surely, she has not perhaps died? Better not let have her die! If only no one else knows about the matter, then there is no fear (1.: it has good ways. - German idiom).

NATHAN. Is there reason for it (1.: has it)?

FRIAR. Trust me, Nathan! Because, look: this is what I think! If on the good that I am doing, the bad borders all too closely, then I would rather not do the good; because while we know fairly reliably what is bad, but by far not what is good. (It) was indeed only natural if the little Christian daughter was

brought up by you in quite the right manner, that you should have been bringing her up as your own daughter. That you should have then done that with all the love and faithfulness - and should be rewarded thus? That I cannot understand (1.: does not want to go into me. - German colloquialism). Well, really, you would have been acting more wisely if you had had the Christian girl brought up through a second person (1.: hand); but in that way you would certainly not have loved the little child of your friend. And children need love - even if it were only the love of a wild beast - (need it) more in those (tender) years than (they need) Christianity. For Christianity there is till plenty of time. If only the girl has in all other respects grown up healthy and pious before your eyes, then she has remained before God's eyes what she has been. And, then, is not all of Christianity built upon Judaism? It has often annoyed me, has cost me enough tears when Christian could so forget that, after all, our Lord himself was a Jew.

NATHAN. You, good Brother, must be my intercessor when hatred and hypocritical piety (f.: hypocrisy) should rise up against me - because of a deed - ah, because of a deed! Well, you, you shall know about it! But take it to the grave with you! I have never to this day been tempted by vanity to tell it to anyone else. To you alone (shall) tell it. To god-like simplicity alone I tell it. Because it alone can understand what kind of of deeds a man devoted to God can wrest from himself.

FRIAR. You are moved and your eyes are filled with tears (1.: stand full of water)?

NATHAN. You met me with the child at Darun. But you probably don't know that some days before at Gath the Christians had murdered all Jews, (together) with (their) wives and children - (you) probably don't know that among these had been my wife with seven hopeful sons who had been forced, all of them, to burn to death in the house of my brother, to whom they had fled.

FRIAR. God Almighty!

NATHAN. When you arrived, I had lain in dust and ashes before God for three days and nights and cried. Cried? Also, really haggled with God, been angry with him, raved, cursed

myself and the world, sworn to Christendom the most implacable hatred -

FRIAR. Ah! I believe you well!

NATHAN. But, then, gradually reason came back. It spoke with a gentle voice: "And nevertheless, God is (f.: there is a God). That too was God's resolve, - that! Well, then! Come! Practice what you have understood long since, what certainly is not harder to practice than to understand, if only you want to. Arise!" - I rose (1.: stood up) and called out to God: "I shall! If you only want that I shall want!" Meanwhile you dismounted from your (1.: the) horse and handed me the child, wrapped in your mantle. What you said to me at that time, what I (said) to you, I have forgotten. That much only I know. I took the child, carried her to my couch, kissed her, threw myself to my knees and sobbed: "God! After seven already now one again!"

FRIAR. Nathan! Nathan! You are a Christian! By God, you are a Christian! A better Christian never has been!

NATHAN. Lucky for us! Because what is making me a Christian (for you), that (also) makes you a Jew for me! But let us no longer merely make each other limp. Action is needed here! And although soon sevenfold love bound me to this one strange girl, as though already the mere thought that in her I should have to lose my seven sons again would not kill me, if Providence should demand her again from my hands, I (shall) obey!

FRIAR. Perfect now! Precisely that very thing I thought to advise you! And that's the way your good spirit has already advised you!

NATHAN. Only it must not be the first one that comes along (1.: first best one - German idiom) who will want to snatch her from me!

FRAIR. No, certainly not!

NATHAN. Whoever does not have greater rights to her than I, must have at least earlier ones -

FRIAR. Of course.

NATHAN. Which are accorded to him by nature and (by) blood.

FRIAR. That is the way I mean it, too!

NATHAN. Therefore pray name me quickly the man who is related to her as brother or uncle, as cousin or otherwise as kinsman; from him I do not want to withhold her who was created and brought up to be an ornament to any family (1.: house), to any faith. I hope you know more than I (do) about this gentleman and his family.

FRIAR. That, good Nathan, really, hardly! Because you have probably heard already that I was with him only all too short a time.

NATHAN. Do you then not know at least of what family the mother was? Was she not a Stauffen?

FRIAR. Quite possible! Yes, I think so.

NATHAN. Wasn't her brother called Konrad von Stauffen? And was a Templar?

FRIAR. Unless I am wrong (1.: deceive myself). But, halt! Here I remember that I still have a little book from the blessed master. I drew it from his bosom when we hastily buried him (1.: scraped him into the earth) near Ascalon.

NATHAN. Well?

FRIAR. There are prayers in it. We call it a breviary. That, I thought, a Christian man can yet use well. I, of course, really not. I can't read.

NATHAN. No matter! But to the thing itself (f.: let us come to the thing at hand).

FRIAR. In that little book are written down in the front and in the back - as I have been told - in the master's very own hand, his and her relatives. (Transl. note: "Her" refers to Recha's mother).

NATHAN. Oh (how) welcome! Go! Run! Fetch me the little book. Hurry! I am prepared to pay for its weight in gold and a thousand thanks to boot! Hurry! Run!

FRIAR. Most gladly! It is (in) Arabic, what the master wrote in it. [Exits.]

NATHAN. It is all one (to me)! Only get it! God! If only I could still keep the girl and with that could purchase such a son-in-law! Hardly, though! Well, let it turn out as it may! But who, indeed, might have it been who lodged that kind of thing before the Patriarch? I mustn't forget to inquire about that. If, indeed, it should (have) come from Daja?

Scene 8

[Daja. - Nathan.]

DAJA. [In haste and agitated.] Just think, Nathan!

NATHAN. Well?

DAJA. The poor child was really quite upset about it! Here (a messenger)....

NATHAN. The Patriarch?

DAJA. The Sultan's sister, Princess Sittah.

NATHAN. Not the Patriarch?

DAJA. No, Sittah. Don't you hear? Princess Sittah sends hither and has her brought to her.

NATHAN. Whom? Has sent for Recha? Sittah has sent for her - and not the Patriarch?

DAJA. How then does he come to your mind?

NATHAN. So you have not heard anything from him recently? Really not? And you have also not told him anything secretly?

DAJA. I? Him?

NATHAN. Where are the messengers?

DAJA. Out in front.

NATHAN. For the sake of precaution, I really want to talk to them myself. Come! If only there is nothing from the

Patriarch (f.: of the Patriarch's doing) behind this matter. [Exits.]

DAJA. And I - I fear still something entirely different. What is the bet? The only supposed daughter of a rich Jew might also not do badly for a Mussulman? Quickly, the Templar will be cheated out of her. Will be (cheated) out of her unless I also risk the second step - (unless) I reveal to her too, who she (really) is! Be of good cheer! Let me make use of that (secret) the first moment (when) I shall have her alone! And that (moment) will be - perhaps rightaway (1.: just now) when I am accompanying her. Such a first hint en route can at least not do any harm. Yes, yes! Go to! Now or never! Go to! [She follows Nathan.]

Act Five

Scene 1

[Scene: The Room In the Sultan's Palace Into Which the Leather Bags of Money Were Being Carried - Same Setting As Act Three, Scene Three - Which Can Still Be Seen.]

[Saladin, and soon thereafter, several Mamelukes.]

SALADIN. Now the money is still standing here! And no one knows to find the dervish who presumably has fallen on a chess board somewhere. That would probably make him forget even himself; why, then, not me, too? Well, patience! - What is it?

A MAMELUKE. Welcome news, Sultan! Joy, Sultan! The caravan from Cairo is arriving, is happily here! With seven years' tribute from the rich Nile.

SALADIN. Well done, Ibrahim! You certainly are a welcome messenger for me! Ha! At last, for once! At last! Have thanks for the good news.

THE MAMELUKE. [Waiting. Aside.] Well? Let's have it!

SALADIN. Why are you waiting ? Be on your way (1.: so go again).

THE MAMELUKE. You aren't going to add anything to the welcome (1.: Is nothing else to be added to the welcome)?

SALADIN. What else, then?

THE MAMELUKE. For the messenger of good news (1.: good messenger) no messenger's reward? Then I would be the first one whom Saladin at last still had learned to reward with (mere) words ? Some fame (1.: also a fame)!

SALADIN. Then just take a bag for yourself yonder.

THE MAMELUKE. No, (I would) rather not! You might then want to give them all to me.

SALADIN. Obstinate fellow (1.: one)! Come here! Here, you take (1.: have) two. Seriously? He is leaving? Outdoes me in generosity? Because surely it must be more difficult (1.: sourer) for him to refuse than for me to give. Ibrahim! What really is coming over me to want to be such a different man so shortly before my exit? Does Saladin not want to die as Saladin? Then he must not live as Saladin either.

A SECOND MAMELUKE. Well, Sultan....

SALADIN. If you are coming to report to me....

SECOND MAMELUKE. That the shipment from Egypt has now arrived (1.: is now here)!

SALADIN. I already know.

SECOND MAMELUKE. Then I came too late!

SALADIN. Why too late? Here, take one or two bags for your good intentions.

SECOND MAMELUKE. Makes three!

SALADIN. Indeed, if you can count! So take them then.

SECOND MAMELUKE. Probably a third (messenger) will be arriving if he can possibly come.

SALADIN. How that?

SECOND MAMELUKE. Well, he probably has broken his neck anyway! Because as soon as we three were sure of the shipment's arrival, each one of us dashed off at full speed (1.: briskly). The one in the lead had a fall; and thus then I come to the fore and remain in the lead, too, until (we come) into the city where, however, Ibrahim the rascal knows the streets better.

SALADIN. Oh, the fallen one! Friend, the fallen one! Go, ride to meet him.

SECOND MAMELUKE. That I shall surely do! And if he is (still) alive, then half of these bags are his. [Exits.]

SALADIN. See what a good, noble fellow this one (is) too! Who can boast of such Mamelukes? And I should not be permitted to think that they help form my example? Away with

the thought of still wanting to accustom them to something different....

A THIRD MAMELUKE. Sultan!

SALADIN. Are you the one who had the fall?

THIRD MAMELUKE. No, I report merely that Emir Mansor who led the caravan is dismounting from his horse....

SALADIN. Bring him! Hurry! - Here he is, indeed!

Scene 2

[Emir Mansor. - Saladin.]

SALADIN. Welcome, Emir! Well, how has it gone? Mansor, Mansor, have you been keeping us waiting long!

MANSOR. The letter reports what (kind of) disorders your Abulkassem first had to quell in Thebais before we could dare to decamp. Thereafter I speeded the train as much as (it) was possible.

SALADIN. I believe you! But you must take, good Mansor, take at once....But do you really like to di it, too?....Must take fresh guards (1.: coverage) at once. You must at once (proceed) yet farther, must bring the greater part of the money (1.: monies) to father in Lebanon.

MANSOR. Gladly! Most gladly!

SALADIN. And be sure not to take too weak a guard. Around Lebanon things are not longer safe (1.: not everything is safe any longer). Haven't you heard? The Templars are stirring again. Be well on your guard! Come then! Where is the caravan resting? I want to see it and want to take care of (1.: agitate) everything myself. [To the Mamelukes.] You (there)! Later on I shall be with Sittah.

Scene 3

[Scene: The Palms In Front of Nathan's House Where the Templar Is Walking Back and Forth.]

TEMPLAR. I never more want to enter the house again (1.: into the house I surely don't want). He surely will appear again (1.: let himself be seen at last). Indeed, formerly one was noticing me so soon, so gladly! I want to live (to see the day) when he should forbid me to let myself be found so eagerly in front of (f.: near) his house! Hm! But I am surely also very angry. What then has embittered me so against him? Didn't he say: he was not yet refusing me anything? And Saladin has taken it upon himself to bring him around. What? Should the Christian really nestle in me still more deeply than the Jew in him? Who really knows himself? How, otherwise, could I want to begrudge him the small prey that he has taken such great pains (1.: made into such an affair) to beguile from the Christians? Of course no small prey, such a creature! Creature? and whose? Surely not the slave's who has floated the block unto life's bleak coast and then decamped? Much more likely the artist's, who in the casually flung-down block conceived the divine figure which he portrayed? Recha's true father remains, despite the Christian who produced her - will remain for (all) eternity, the Jew. If I think of her merely as a Christian wench, think of her devoid of everything that only a Jew like that could give her, speak, heart, what would there be about her that would please you? Nothing! Little! even her smile, if it were nothing but gentle, pretty twitching of her muscles that made her smile, unworthy of the charm with which it is cloaking her mouth. No, not even her smile! Have I not seen it wasted more prettily on silliness, on trifles, on mockery, on flatterers, and on paramours? Has it, then, bewitched me too? Has it, then, also drawn from me the desire to flutter away my life in her sunshine? Not that I knew. And am I, nevertheless, cross with the one who alone bestowed on her that higher value? How that? Why? What if I merited the scorn with which Saladin dismissed me? (It is) already bad enough that Saladin could believe it! How small must I have seemed to him then! How contemptible! And all that for a Curd! Curd! That won't do (1.: that doesn't go thusly).

Give in! If, on top (of that), Daja should merely have gossiped about something to me (something) that could hardly be proven? Look, here at last he is stepping from his house, immersed in conversation! Ha! With whom! With him? With my Friar? Ha! Then he surely knows everything already! Has perhaps been betrayed to the Patriarch! Ha! What have I, pighead, now done (l.: committed)! That a single spark of that passion could yet burn so much of our brain! Decide quickly what is to be done now! I want to watch for them on the side here, - (see) whether perhaps the Friar will leave him.

Scene 4

[Nathan. - The Friar.]

NATHAN. [Coming closer.] Again, good Brother, have many thanks!

FRIAR. And you, too (l.: the same).

NATHAN. I? From you? What for? For my stubbornness in forcing upon you what you don't need? Yes, if yours had only also given in to it, (if only) you did not want at all cost be richer than I.

FRIAR. The book does not belong to me, anyway, (it) really belongs to the daughter, anyway, is actually the daughter's entire patrimony. Well, then, after all, she has you. (May) God only grant that you may never rue having done so much for her!

NATHAN. Could I (do) that? That I can never. Be unconcerned (f.: never fear)!

FRIAR. Well, well! The patriarchs and the Templars....

NATHAN. Are unable ever to do me so much evil that anything could rue me - let alone that! And are you then so quite certain that it is a Templar who is inciting your Patriarch?

FRIAR. It can almost be none other. A Templar spoke to him shortly before - and what I heard sounded like it.

NATHAN. But there is, indeed, only a single one in Jerusalem now, and that one I know. That one is my friend. A young, noble, straightforward man!

FRIAR. Quite right, the same one! But what one is and what one must seem to the world, that perhaps does not always jibe.

NATHAN. Unfortunately not. So let whoever it may be do his worst or his best! With your book, Brother, I defy all, and with it am going to the Sultan straightaway.

FRIAR. Much luck! So then I will just leave you here.

NATHAN. And you have not even seen her! Be sure to return soon, often. If only just for today, still the Patriarch will not learn anything! But what? Tell him even today whatever you wish.

FRIAR. Not I. Farewell! [Exits.]

NATHAN. Don't forget us, Brother! God! That I cannot sink to my knees at once here under the open sky! How the knot that so often has been causing me anxiety is now dissolving by itself! God! How light I feel (1.: how light is me) that from now on I no longer need conceal anything in this world! That now before myself I can walk as freely as before you who alone need judge man according to his deeds which so seldom are his deeds, oh God!

Scene 5

[Nathan. - The Templar, who approaches him from the side.]

TEMPLAR. Hey! Wait, Nathan, take me along!

NATHAN. Who is calling. Is it you, Sir? Where (have you) been that I could not meet you at the Sultan's?

TEMPLAR. We have missed each other (1.: gone amiss of each other). Don't take it amiss!

NATHAN. Not I, but Saladin....

TEMPLAR. You have just been with him (1.: there)....

NATHAN. But you talked to him? Well, then it is all right.

TEMPLAR. But he wants to talk to us both together.

NATHAN. So much the better. Just come along. My errand is to his house, anyway, (l.: him).

TEMPLAR. But may I inquire, Nathan, who (it was who) just left you?

NATHAN. But surely you don't know him?

TEMPLAR. Was that not the good scout, the lay brother whom the Patriarch likes so much to use as his track-hound?

NATHAN. Can be! He is, indeed, with the Patriarch.

TEMPLAR. The trick isn't bad at all: to send simplicity ahead of knavery.

NATHAN. Yes - the stupid kind (but) not the pious kind.

TEMPLAR. The Patriarch doesn't believe in the pious kind.

NATHAN. For this one I stand (good). He will not help his Patriarch to consummate anything unbecoming.

TEMPLAR. At least he acts that way. But has he, then, told you nothing about me?

NATHAN. About you? About, by name, really nothing. (But) then, again, he would hardly know your name, (would he)?

TEMPLAR. Hardly.

NATHAN. About a Templar, though, he has told me....

TEMPLAR. And what?

NATHAN. By whom once and for all he could not have meant you.

TEMPLAR. Who knows? Let (me) only first hear.

NATHAN. That one had accused me with his Patriarch....

TEMPLAR. Accused you? That is - may he permit it (l.: by his favor) - a lie (l.: lied). Hear me, Nathan! I am not the man who would be able to deny anything. What I did,

that I did! But neither am I the one who would like to defend everything he has done as well done. Why should I be ashamed of a failing? Have I not the firm resolve to make it good? And do I not perhaps know how far men can go (with that resolve) ? Hear me, Nathan! I am, to be sure, the lay brother's Templar who is said to have accused you. But you know what made me angry! What made my blood boil in all veins! I, knave! I came to throw myself into your arms so completely, body and soul. How you received me - how coldly - how lukewarm - because luke-warm is worse still than cold; how calculatingly you took pains to dodge me; with what questions drawn from (thin) air you seemed to want to give me an answer. (Of) that I dare hardly think, even now, if I am to remain composed. Hear me, Nathan! (When I was) in that kind of agitation, Daja slunk after me and threw her secret at me (1.: my head), (her secret) which to me seemed to contain the explanation of your enigmatic conduct.

NATHAN. How that?

TEMPLAR. Only listen to me to the end (1.: listen me out)! I imagined that you did not want to lose again to a Christian what you then once had slyly acquired from Christians. And so it occurred to me to make short and good shrift (and) to put the knife at your throat.

NATHAN. Short and good shrift, - short and good? And good? Where is the good?

TEMPLAR. Listen to me, Nathan! To be sure, I did not do right! You are probably not guilty at all. That fool, Daja, doesn't know whereof she speaks - hates you (1.: is hateful towards you) - seeks only thereby to involve you in a bad affair. (It) could be! (It) could be! I am a young, unthinking fool who always raves only at both extremes - who now is doing much too much, now much too little. That, too, could be! Forgive me, Nathan.

NATHAN. Well, if, indeed, you approach me that way -

TEMPLAR. In short - I went to the Patriarch! But did not mention you by name. That is a lie, as (I have) said! I have only related the case to him in a very general way, in order to hear his opinion. That, too, could have been omitted; yes,

indeed! Because did I not already know the Patriarch to be a knave? Could I not just right-away have called you to account yourself? Did I have to subject (1.: sacrifice) the poor girl to the danger of losing such a father? Well, what does it matter? The Patriarch's knavery that always remains so much the same brought me to my senses (1.: myself) again in short order (1.: by the shortest way). Because, hear me, Nathan, hear me to the end! Suppose, he knew your name too, what more now, what more? After all, he can only take the girl away from you, if she doesn't belong to any other (man) but you. He can, indeed, drag her from your house to a convent only. Therefore - give her to me! Give her only to me and let him come! Ha! He shall well leave it be, (to try) to take my wife from me. Give her to me quickly! May she be your daughter now, or may she not! Be (she) Christian or Jewess or neither! All the same! All the same! I shall neither now or every at any other time in my life ask you about it. Be it as it may!

NATHAN. You are probably fancying that (it is) very necessary to conceal the truth from me?

TEMPLAR. Be it as it may!

NATHAN. I have indeed not yet denied it to you - or to whomever else it behooves to know - that she is a Christian and is nothing but my foster daughter. But why I have not as yet divulged it to her? About <u>that</u> I have to apologize to <u>her</u> only.

TEMPLAR. <u>That</u> you should not need with her. Do not begrudge her, pray, that she might never regard you differently (1.: with different eyes)! Do spare her the discovery! Still, indeed, you, you all by yourself, have to deal with her. Give her to me. I beg you, Nathan, give her to me. It is I alone who can save her for you for the second time - and want to (save her).

NATHAN. Yes, (you) could, (you) could! But now no longer. It is too late for that.

TEMPLAR. How so? Too late?

NATHAN. Thanks be to the Patriarch....

TEMPLAR. The Patriarch? Thanks? (To) him thanks? What for? That one would have wanted to earn thanks from us? For what? For what?

NATHAN. That we know now to whom she is related, know now into whose hands she can now be safely delivered.

TEMPLAR. For that I thank him - as though one could have to thank him for more!

NATHAN. From those (hands), too, you must now receive her and not from mine.

TEMPLAR. Poor Recha! What all is happening to you, poor Recha! What would be good fortune for other orphans, becomes ill luck for you! Nathan! And where are they, these relatives?

NATHAN. Where are they?

TEMPLAR. And who are they?

NATHAN. Especially a brother has been found with whom you must sue for her.

TEMPLAR. A brother? What is he, that brother? A soldier? A cleric? Let (me) hear what I can promise myself.

NATHAN. I believe that he is neither - or both. I don't know him well yet.

TEMPLAR. And otherwise?

NATHAN. A gallant man! With whom Recha will not be faring badly.

TEMPLAR. But a Christian! Sometimes I don't know at all, too, what I should think of you; don't take offense, Nathan. Will she not have to act the Christian among Christians? And will she not finally become that which she has been acting for so long? Will the pure wheat that you have sown not finally be suffocated by the tares? And that worries you so little? In spite of that you can say - you - that she will not be faring badly with her brother?

NATHAN. I think! I hope! And if indeed something should be amiss (1.: be lacking) with him, (then) has she not still always got you and me?

TEMPLAR. Oh! What could she be missing with him! Will not the little brother provide the little sister amply enough with food and clothing, with sweets and finery? And what more does a little sister need? Well, indeed: still a man, too! Well, well - him, too, him, too, the little brother will yet provide for her in his (own good) time - wherever he only can be found! The most Christian, the best! Nathan! Nathan! What an angel had you shaped whom now others will botch so!

NATHAN. There's no need (1.: has no need) for fear! It (f.: That angel) will always still continue to be worthy enough of your love.

TEMPLAR. Do not say that! Of my love, don't say that. Because that does not allow anything to be withheld from it, nothing - be it ever so small! No name either! But halt! Is she perhaps already surmising what is about to happen to her?

NATHAN. (It is) possible; though I would not know from what source?

TEMPLAR. All the same (1.: then also much); she shall - she must learn from me first what kind of fate is threatening her. My intention of not seeing her again, of (not) talking to her (again) before I might call her mine, is dropping by the wayside. I am hastening....

NATHAN. Remain! Where (are you going)?

TEMPLAR. To see whether this girl's soul perhaps has enough courage (1.: is man enough) to make the only decision that would be worthy of her!

NATHAN. What decision (1.: which one)?

TEMPLAR. That one: to be concerned (1.: ask) no further about you and her brother -

NATHAN. And?

TEMPLAR. And to follow me - even if because of that she should also have to become a Mussulman's wife.

NATHAN. Remain! You will not find her; she is with Sittah, with the Sultan's sister.

TEMPLAR. Since when? Why?

NATHAN. And if at the same time you want to find the brother there with them, you have only to come with me.

TEMPLAR. The brother? Sittah's or Recha's?

NATHAN. Easily both. Come only with me! I beg you, come! [He leads him away.]

Scene 6

[Scene: In Sittah's Quarters.] [Sittah and Recha engaged in conversation.]

SITTAH. How happy I am about you, sweet girl! Only do not be so oppressed! So timid! So bashful! Be gay! Be more talkative! More confiding!

RECHA. Princess....

SITTAH. Not that way! Not "Princess"! Call me Sittah, your friend - your sister. Call me your little mother! I could almost really be (that) too. So young! So wise! So pious! All the things you know (1.: what all you don't know)! All the things you must have read!

RECHA. I, read? Sittah, you are mocking your stupid little sister. I can hardly read.

SITTAH. Can hardly, liar!

RECHA. A little of my father's handwriting! I thought you were talking about books.

SITTAH. Indeed! About books.

RECHA. Well, to read books is really difficult for me!

SITTAH. Are you serious (1.: in earnest)?

RECHA. In all seriousness. My father likes the cold book learning too little that impresses itself on the brain only with dead symbols.

SITTAH. Oh, what you are saying! However, (he) is probably not so very wrong! And so many of the things you know...?

RECHA. I know solely from his mouth and could still tell

you about most of it how, where, why, he taught (it) to me.

SITTAH. In that way, of course, everything sticks better to your mind (1.: hitches itself better). In that manner the entire soul learns at one stroke.

RECHA. Surely Sittah, too, has read little or nothing!

SITTAH. How so? I am not proud of the opposite. However, how so? Your reason (for saying that)! Speak unafraid. Your reason?

RECHA. She is so straightforward and good, and so natural and so wholly resembling only herself....

SITTAH. Well?

RECHA. That, says my father, the books permit us only rarely.

SITTAH. Oh, what kind of a man is your father!

RECHA. Is that not true?

SITTAH. How closely he surely always hits the mark!

RECHA. Is that not true? - And that father -

SITTAH. What is (happening) to you, dear?

RECHA. That father -

SITTAH. God! You are crying?

RECHA. And that father - ah! It must (come) out! My heart will have vent, will have vent.... [She throws herself at Sittah's feet, overwhelmed by tears.]

SITTAH. Child, what is happening to you? Recha?

RECHA. That father I am supposed - am supposed to lose!

SITTAH. You? Lose? Him? How that? - Be calm! Never and never! - Arise!

RECHA. You shall not have offered yourself in vain as my friend, as my sister.

SITTAH. But that I am! (I) Am that! - But do arise! Else I must call for help.

RECHA. [Who takes heart and gets up.] Ah! Forgive (me)! Forgive! My pain has made me forget who you are. Before Sittah no whining, no despair count. Cold, calm reason alone will prevail upon her with regard to everything. Whose cause that is pleading with her will be victorious!

SITTAH. Well then?

RECHA. No, my friend, my sister does not permit that! (She) Does never permit another father to be forced upon me!

SITTAH. Another father? Be forced upon (you)? You? Who can do that? Could even merely want to do that, dear?

RECHA. Who? My good, bad Daja could want that - wants to do (exactly) that. Yes, you probably don't know that good, bad Daja? Well, may God forgive her that! Reward her for it! She has done me so much good - so much evil!

SITTAH. (Done) evil to you? Then indeed she must have really (done) little good.

RECHA. No! Very much, very much!

SITTAH. Who is she?

RECHA. A Christian woman who has nursed me in my childhood, has nursed me so (well)! You would not believe it (1.: you don't believe it)! Who has made me miss a mother so little! May God reward her for it! But who has also frightened me so. (Tortured me so)!

SITTAH. And with what? Why? How?

RECHA. Oh! The poor woman - as I told you - is a Christian woman - must torture from love, is one of the devout dreamers who fancy that they know the universal, only true way to God!

SITTAH. Now I understand!

RECHA. And feel themselves compelled to lead upon it every one who misses that path. They hardly, too, can act otherwise. Because if it is true that only that path alone leads in the right direction (1.: rightly), how should they calmly watch their friends tread another - that is leading to ruin, to eternal ruin? It should be possible to love and to hate the same

person at the same time. But even that isn't what is finally forcing me into making loud complaints about her. Her sighing, her warning, her praying, her threatening. I should gladly have suffered longer yet, gladly! It still always led me to thoughts that were good and useful. And who, after all, is not fundamentally flattered to feel himself considered so highly cherished and dear by whoever it may be that he could not bear the thought that some day he should have to miss us forever.

SITTAH. Very true!

RECHA. However, however, that goes too far! Against that I can pit nothing, not patience, not deliberation, - nothing!

SITTAH. What? Whom?

RECHA. (That) which she just now claims to have revealed to me.

SITTAH. Revealed? And just now?

RECHA. Only just now! On our way hither we were approaching a crumbled Christian temple. Suddenly she stood still, seemed to struggle with herself, gazed with wet eyes, now towards heaven (1.: the sky), then at me. "Come," she said finally, "let us go through this temple here in that direction!" She goes; I follow her, and my eye roves with shuddering through the tottering ruins. Now she stands (still) again, and I find (1.: see) myself at the sunken steps of a rotted altar with her. How did I feel (1.: how did it become to me)? When there with hot tears, with wrung hands, she threw herself at my feet....

SITTAH. Good child!

RECHA. And by the Divine One (f.: Holy Virgin) who, she said, surely had granted so many a prayer, had performed so many a miracle in that place, implored me - with looks of true compassion implored me, to please have mercy on myself! At least to forgive her if she had to reveal to me that her Church had a claim to me.

SITTAH. [Aside.] Unfortunate one! I am guessing it!

RECHA. I was, (she said), of Christian blood, had been

baptized, - was not Nathan's daughter, he not my father! God! God! He was not my father! Sittah! Sittah! See me once more at your feet....

SITTAH. Recha! But don't (1.: not indeed)! Arise! My brother is coming! Arise!

Scene 7

[Saladin. - Sittah. - Recha.]

SALADIN. What goes on (1.: gives) here, Sittah?

SITTAH. She is out of her mind! God!

SALADIN. Who is she?

SITTAH. You know, indeed....

SALADIN. Our Nathan's daughter? What is wrong with her?

SITTAH. But come to yourself, child! The Sultan....

RECHA. [Who is dragging herself on her knees to Saladin's feet, her head bowed down to the ground.] I will not rise! Will not rise before - don't want to see the Sultan face before - (not) admire the reflection of eternal justice and kindness in his eyes, on his forehead, before....

SALADIN. Stand.... stand up!

RECHA. Before he promises me....

SALADIN. Come! I promise.... Be (it) what it may!

RECHA. No more, no less than to leave my father to me and me to him! I still don't know who else is demanding to be my father - can demand (it). Neither (do I) want to know it. But does indeed only the blood make a father? Only the blood?

SALADIN. [Raising her to her feet.] I notice well (f.: I am beginning to see)! Who was so cruel then to put that sort of thing into your head? Has it then already been completely unraveled? Proven?

RECHA. (It) must well (be). Because Daja claims to have it from my wet-nurse.

SALADIN. Your wet-nurse!

RECHA. Who dying felt herself bound to confide in her.

SALADIN. Dying, indeed! Not also already delirious? And even if it were true! Yes, indeed, the blood, the blood alone does not make a father by a long while! Hardly makes a father of an animal! At most bestowes the first right towards acquiring that title for oneself. But don't let yourself be frightened. - And do you know something? As soon as two fathers are fighting over you - let them both be - take a third one! Then take me as your father.

SITTAH. Oh, do that! Oh, do that!

SALADIN. I shall be a good father, (a) really good father! But halt! Something much better is occurring to me. Why do you need fathers, anyway? Suppose they (should) die? Look around in good time for one who would run life's race on equal terms with us! Haven't you met (1.: do you not know) yet someone like that?

SITTAH. Don't make her blush!

SALADIN. That task I have set myself, indeed. Blushing makes the ugly ones so beautiful, and should (it) not make the beautiful ones still more beautiful? I have ordered your father, Nathan, and yet another one - another one yet, to come hither. Can you guess who it is (1.: can you guess him)? Hither! You will indeed permit me, Sittah?

SITTAH. Brother.

SALADIN. That you (may) be sure to blush much in his presence, dear girl!

RECHA. In whose presence (1.: before whom)? Blush?....

SALADIN. Little hypocrite! Well, then blanch instead! As you want - and can! [A slave girl enters and approaches Sittach.] They are indeed already here.

SITTAH. Good! Just let them enter. - It is they, brother!

Scene 8

[Nathan and the Templar. - Saladin. - Sittah. - Recha.]

SALADIN. Ah, my good, dear friends! You, you, Nathan, I must inform first of all (1.: above all things) that now you can send again for your money as soon as you can....

NATHAN. Sultan!....

SALADIN. Now I am (1.: stand) at your service too....

NATHAN. Sultan!

SALADIN. The caravan has arrived (1.: is here). Now I am as rich again as I have not been for a long time. Come tell me what you need in order to undertake something really big! Because you, too, you, too, you merchantmen can never have too much cash!

NATHAN. And why (speak) first of that trifle? I see yonder and I in tears which to dry is of far greater concern to me. [advances towards Recha.] You have been crying? What is wrong with you? But you are still my daughter?

RECHA. My father!....

NATHAN. We understand each other. Enough! Be gay! Be composed! If only in all other respects your heart is still yours! If only otherwise your heart is not threatened with a loss! Your father is not lost to you!

RECHA. None, none else!

TEMPLAR. Else none? Well! Then I have been deceiving myself. What one does not have to fear to lose, one has never believed to own and (one has) never (really) desired. Very well, indeed! Very well, indeed! That changes, changes everything! Saladin, we came (here) at your behest. However, I misled you; you need not (1.: now only) both any further.

SALADIN. How impetuous, young man! Is really everything supposed to (1.: shall then everything go) go your way (1.: meet you)? Everything make you out?

TEMPLAR. Well, indeed, you are hearing, indeed, you see, Sultan!

SALADIN. Ah, to be sure! Bad enough that you have been not sure of your case!

TEMPLAR. So now I am that.

SALADIN. (He) who thus puts overweening confidence in a good deed is taking it back. What you have saved is not because of that your property. Otherwise the robber, whom his greed is chasing into the fire, would be a hero as well as you. [Advancing towards Recha in order to lead her towards the Templar.] Come, dear girl, come! Don't be too severe with her. (1.: Don't take it too exactly with him). Because if he were different, were less warm and proud he would have let it be, to save you. You must reckon him one for the other. Come! Shame him! Do what would behoove him to do! Confess to him your love! Give yourself to him! And if he scorns you, if he ever forgets how incomparably much more you have done for him in (making) that step than he for you....But what has he really done for you? Let himself be scorched a little by smoke! That's something to boast about (1.: right)! In that way he has nothing (in common with) my brother, my Assad! That way he is wearing his mask, not his heart. Come, dear.

SITTAH. Go! Go, dear, go! It is still little enough for your gratitude. Still little enough.

NATHAN. Stop, Saladin! Stop, Sittah!

SALADIN. You, too?

NATHAN. Still another has the right to speak....

SALADIN. Who is denying that? Undisputedly, Nathan, such a foster father is entitled to a voice! The first, if you wish. You hear, I know the nature of the entire situation.

NATHAN. Not so entirely! I am not talking about myself. There is another, far, far other, to to whom I beg Saladin to listen.

SALADIN. Who?

NATHAN. Her brother!

SALADIN. Recha's brother?

NATHAN. Yes!

RECHA. My brother? (So I do) have a brother?

TEMPLAR. [starting out of a wild, mute distraction.] Where? Where is he, that brother? Not yet here? I was indeed supposed to meet him here.

NATHAN. Only (have) patience!

TEMPLAR. [Extremely bitter.] He has foisted a father upon her; will he not (be able to) find a brother for her?

SALADIN. That was all we needed (1.: that has still been lacking)! Such a base suspicion would never have come over Assad's lips. Good! Just continue like that!

NATHAN. Forgive him. I gladly forgive him. Who knows what we might be thinking in his place, at his age. [Advancing towards him cordially.] Of course, Sir! Suspicion follows distrust! If you had considered me sufficiently worthy right away to reveal your true name to me....

TEMPLAR. How?

NATHAN. You are not a Stauffen!

TEMPLAR. Who am I then?

NATHAN. Your name is not Curd von Stauffen.

TEMPLAR. What then is my name?

NATHAN. Your name is Leu von Filnek.

TEMPLAR. What?

NATHAN. You are startled (1.: you are startling)?

TEMPLAR. Rightly so! Who is saying that?

NATHAN. I - who can tell you yet more. However, I am not proving you a liar.

TEMPLAR. Not?

NATHAN. (It) can also well be that that name, too, is appropriate for you.

TEMPLAR. I should think that. [Aside.] To say that, God prompted him!

NATHAN. Because your mother was a Stauffen. Her brother - your uncle - who brought you up, with whom your parents left you in Germany when (they were) driven from there by the rough skies and again came to this country - was called Curd von Stauffen, may perhaps have adopted you as his own child (1.: in child's stead)! Is it already a long time since you then came over with him? And is he still alive!

TEMPLAR. What shall I say? Nathan! Indeed! So it is! He himself is dead. I arrived only with the last reinforcements of our Order. But - but - what has all that to do with Recha's brother?

NATHAN. Your father....

TEMPLAR. What? Him, too, you have known? Him, too?

NATHAN. He was my friend.

TEMPLAR. Was your friend? Is it possible, Nathan!....

NATHAN. (He) called himself Wolf von Filnek, but was not a German.

TEMPLAR. You know that too?

NATHAN. (He) was merely married to a German, had followed your mother to Germany for only a short while....

TEMPLAR. No further! I beg (of) you! But Recha's brother? Recha's brother.

NATHAN. Is you!

TEMPLAR. I? Her brother?

RECHA. He my brother?

SITTAH. Brother and sister!

SALADIN. They - brother and sister!

RECHA. [Wants to advance towards the Templar.] Ah! My brother.

TEMPLAR. [Steps back.] Her brother!

RECHA. [Stops and turns to Nathan.] (It) cannot be! Not be! His heart knows nothing about it! We are deceivers! God!

SALADIN. [To the Templar.] Deceivers? What? Is that what you are thinking? Can you think? Deceiver, you yourself! Because every thing is a lie about you: features and voice and gait! Nothing yours! Not to want to recognize such a sister! Out of my sight (1.: begone)!

TEMPLAR. [Approaching him humbly.] (Pray) do not misconceive my astonishment, Sultan! Misjudge not in a moment the like of which you hardly ever seen, your Assad, - him and me! [Hurrying towards Nathan.] You are taking away from me and (you) are giving to me (at the same time), Nathan! Both with full hands (f.: Generously)! No! You are giving me more than you are taking away from me! Infinitely more! [Embracing Recha.] Ah, my sister! My sister!

NATHAN. Blanda von Filnek!

TEMPLAR. Blanda? Blanda? Not Recha? No longer your Recha? God! You are casting her off, giving her again her Christian name! Casting her off because of me! Nathan! Nathan! Why make her pay for it? Her!

NATHAN. And what? Oh, my children! My children! Because my daughter's brother would not also be my child - as soon as he wants (to be)? [While Nathan is giving himself to their embraces, Saladin steps towards his sister with perturbed astonishment.]

SALADIN. What do you say, sister?

SITTAH. I am moved....

SALADIN. And I - I almost shrink with shuddering before an even greater emotion! Prepare yourself only as well as you can.

SITTAH. How?

SALADIN. Nathan, a word with you (1.: for a word)! [While Nathan steps over to him, Sittah advances toward the brother and sister in order to show them her sympathy, and Nathan and Saladin are whispering to each other.]

SALADIN. Listen. So listen, Nathan! Were you not saying just now - ?

NATHAN. What?

SALADIN. That her father had not been from Germany, not a native German? What, then, was he? Where else did he come from?

NATHAN. That (was something that) he himself never did want to confide to me. From his lips (mouth) I know nothing about that.

SALADIN. And otherwise, also, was not a Frank (f.: European). Not an Occidental?

NATHAN. Oh! That he was not, that he confessed, to be sure. - He used to like best to talk Persian.

SALADIN. Persian? Persian? What more do I want? It is he! It was he!

NATHAN. Who?

SALADIN. My brother! Most certainly! My Assad! Most certainly!

NATHAN. Well, if you yourself discovered it: take the confirmation in this book here! [Handing him the breviary.]

SALADIN. [Opening it eagerly.] Ah! His handwriting (1.: his hand)! That, too, I recognize again!

NATHAN. As yet they know nothing! as yet it is still up to you (1.: still stands with you) alone what they shall learn about it.

SALADIN. [While leafing through the breviary.] I - not acknowledge my brother's children? I - not my niece and nephew - not my children? Not acknowledge them? I? Probably leave them to you? [Talking loudly again.] It is they! Is they, Sittah - they are - they are both my....your brother's children! [He runs to embrace them.]

SITTAH. (Following him.) What am I hearing! (How) could it also have been otherwise - have been otherwise!

SALADIN. [To the Templar.] Now notwithstanding you must, indeed, (you) obstinate one (1.: pig-head) must love me! [To Recha.] Now, after all, I am what I offered to be (1.: for

what I offered myself)? May you like (it) or not!

SITTAH. I, too! I, too!

SALADIN. [Returning to Templar.] My son! My Assad! My Assad's son!

TEMPLAR. I - of your blood! Thus, then, those dreams with which they were cradling my childhood were after all - after all more than dreams! [Falling at Saladin's feet.]

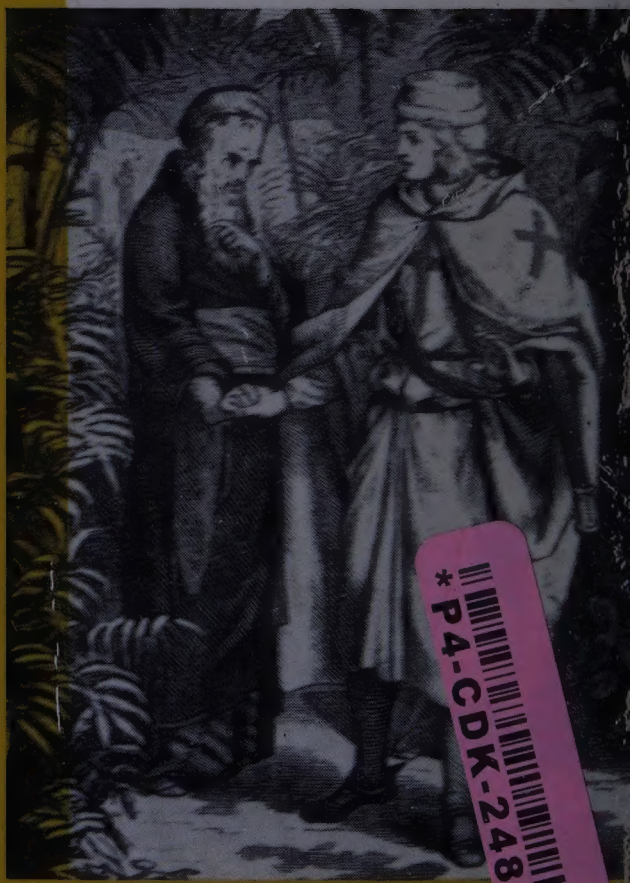
SALADIN. [Raising the Templar to his feet.] Look (at) the villain! He knows something about that, and could have wanted to make me his murderer! Wait!

[Amid mute embraces by all the curtain falls.]

LESSING

Nathan der Weise

A TRANSLATION



* P4-CDK-248 *

$1.25

BARRON'S EDUCATIONAL SERIES • GREAT NECK, NEW YORK